THE GAMBIT BOOK OF INSTRUCTIVE CHESS PUZZLES

Graham Burgess

Improve your chess with these
300 carefully selected puzzles

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Solving chess puzzles is one of the most effective ways to improve your game. This convenient book provides 300 exercises, with instructive points highlighted in the solutions.

There is something here for everyone. The first 64 puzzles are based on a clear-cut tactic or checkmate, such as those explained in Gambit's best-sellers *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess* and *Chess Tactics for Kids*. In practice it is vital to defend resiliently and seek counterattacking chances – there is an innovative chapter on these rarely-covered themes, as well as endgame puzzles and ones where the reader must decide how to punch home an attack.

Later chapters develop your ability to make tough chessboard decisions. Attack, sacrifice, grab material, defend or simplify – you decide! Principles and guidelines are emphasized, together with common sources of error. The final section of puzzles will prove a stern challenge even for the best players, with the reader exposed to the full complexity of modern chess – with a few helpful hints along the way.

Gambit Publications has been publishing top-quality innovative chess books since 1998, winning numerous awards in several countries. FIDE Master **Graham Burgess** is Gambit's Editorial Director, and one of the founders of the company. He has written more than twenty books and holds the world record for marathon blitz chess playing. He lives in Minnesota.

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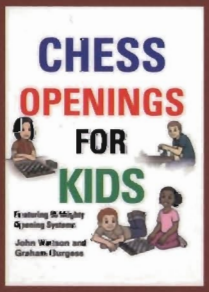

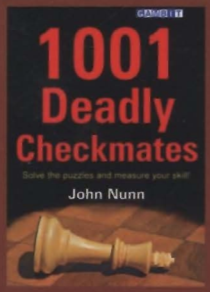

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Introduction

The problem with many chess puzzle books is that they only teach you to become better at solving chess tactics puzzles. That's fine if a puzzle position happens to appear on your board during a game, but less useful otherwise.

The aim of this book is to help my readers make better chessboard *decisions*. On every single move of every chess game you will ever play, you need to make a decision. Tactical skills are vital if you are ever to make a good decision, but if you try to solve every situation with tactics, you will squander a lot of opportunities.

I tackled a lot of tactics puzzles when I was a junior. According to the scoring systems in those books, I performed extremely well – looking back over my answers, I wouldn't do much better now. Yet in my games back then, I found very few opportunities to use those apparent skills. I would feel uncomfortable as soon as the position became at all unclear, and throw an advantage away by the desire to regain control – a typical error of a type that we see players making many times in this book. I would often convince myself that an idea didn't work, simply because I couldn't analyse it to a finish.

A hallmark of strong chess-players is their ability to make good choices even when they can't analyse the position exhaustively. They are able to determine what helps their position most, and makes the opponent's task more difficult. They avoid releasing tension or exchanging pieces unless they have something to gain from it. As Jonathan Rowson indicated in *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, they "go with the flow", seeing simply what is necessary without knowing the precise outcome. This rare ability that chess-players develop appears to be transferable to non-chess decision-making, and may be a reason why chess-players tend to be successful in other fields, such as business management, banking, mathematics and trading/stockbroking.

In this book, in addition to tactical exercises, I present positions that call for a calm decision, or for a good assessment based on intuition and analysis. The final three chapters in the book offer a chance to practice accurately visualizing positions several moves ahead – a vital skill that only

comes with experience. You may find some of these exercises frustrating, but it's useful training – and at least if you make a mistake here, it will be less painful than doing so in a tournament game. There are also puzzles where there is in fact little to calculate, but the challenge comes from seeing the key idea at all – creativity and imagination are required.

Throughout the book, in the solutions and sometimes the captions, I emphasize as many instructive points as I can. These include typical sources of error, principles, rules of thumb and thinking methods that could have been employed to find the solution.

To get the most out of this book, please tackle each position as if it arose in an important tournament game. Think carefully before making your decision, just as you would if a money prize, or victory for your team, hinged on the result of your game. Assume you have enough time on the clock (let's say 20 minutes) to make a careful choice. If you really have no idea, then decide on a move in any case, like you would have to at the board. *Please* don't just glance at the diagram, choose a move in a few seconds, and then look at the solution. That way you'll learn very little. It's your own effort that really counts – the harder you work, the more you'll expand your horizons. I'll also ask that you avoid reasoning of the type "this *is* a puzzle, so the solution must be [a dramatic move/sacrifice]". Often it won't be – the whole point of a puzzle might be to *reject* such a move – and in any case, you're putting yourself in an artificial situation, rather than training for over-the-board decision-making.

Obviously, you shouldn't use a computer to analyse the position, or move the pieces around on a board. You're very welcome to set the position up on a real board, and by all means have a clock ticking if this helps you focus.

Once you've finished the book, I hope you'll experience improved results. You can also turn to page 159 to get some idea of how well you have done. But this is just for fun, and shouldn't be taken too seriously!

Acknowledgements, Methods and Organization

All the puzzle positions in this book are from games played in 2010 or 2011, or in events ending in those years. To the best of my knowledge, they have not appeared elsewhere as puzzle positions, or featured prominently on chess news sites. Unless you follow modern chess extremely closely, you are unlikely to have seen many (or indeed any) of them before.

I generated all the puzzles from scratch by analysing unannotated games – mostly from classical time-limit grandmaster play. The main source was Mark Crowther's TWIC (The Week in Chess), while I also examined games downloaded from iccf-webchess.com (correspondence chess) and tcec-chess.org (computer games), to cast the net even wider. The first step was to set a computer to work, blunderchecking a large number of games. (I should thank my wife, June Stengel, for allowing me to commandeer her computer for prolonged periods for this purpose.) This helped identify missed opportunities and tactically interesting episodes. I was left with a few thousand games to examine by hand in search of good puzzle positions. I was looking for positions where the right path is hard to guess without seeing the main idea, and where there is only one solution. My goal was to find puzzles of a wide range of difficulties and themes, and featuring many instructive points.

I roughly categorized the positions with a variety of labels: Easy, Normal and Advanced are self-explanatory; the level of complexity was described as Clear, Tricky or Messy. And some puzzles were marked as Endgame or Attack/Defence/Counterattack. I then sent the shortlist of puzzles to two testers, who attempted the positions and sent their feedback to me. I am very grateful to these testers, as their responses greatly improved the final book. They were:

Wolff Morrow, who produces the cover images for many of Gambit's books. He lives in Texas, and is an enthusiastic club-level player. He didn't get through all the puzzles, but put a lot of time and effort into solving as many as he could, and provided some very useful thoughts.

Sean Marsh lives in England, and has done some online work for Gambit in addition to running a popular chess blog (marshtowers.blogspot.com).

He is a strong club player who has been very close to breaking through the 2200 barrier. He tackled most of the puzzles, trying to solve them within the time constraints of a normal tournament game. His thoughtful comments also helped me to refine many of the puzzles and throw out some of the less satisfactory ones.

Naturally, at every stage of the work on this book, I also used computer engines to test and verify the analysis. My main workhorses were Houdini, Robbolito and Rybka 4, together with a big collection of tablebases. An upgrade to a powerful six-core computer towards the end of the work enabled a final round of even more rigorous checking. But nothing can replace human thought in a book designed to teach humans to play better chess.

My ratings of the puzzles, together with the feedback from the testers, formed the basis for the division into eight chapters and the ordering within them. Easy & Clear puzzles are in Chapter 1, while the Advanced & Messy ones found a home in Chapter 8. The large number of Normal & Tricky puzzles were split in two: Chapter 4 contains those where the main problem is seeing the idea at all, while Chapter 6 is the place for ones with a greater emphasis on calculation and logic.

Within each chapter, we start with puzzles with long captions, arranged three to a page. Then come ones with short captions (four per page), and finally there are 'no clues' positions, arranged six to a page. Within each of these three sections, the puzzles are arranged in very roughly ascending order of difficulty.

Symbols

I shall assume that my readers are familiar with algebraic chess notation. A few other standard symbols are used in this book:

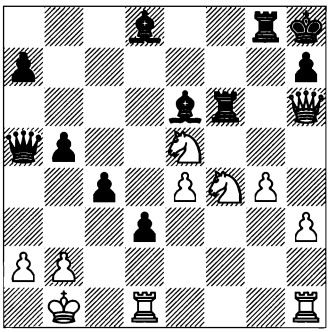
!!	brilliant move	+	check
!	good move	++	double check
!?	interesting move	#	checkmate
?!	dubious move	Ch	Championship
?	bad move	Corr.	correspondence game
??	blunder	(*n*)	*n*th match game

1 Not Just for Beating Your Dad!

The puzzles in this chapter are based on a single clear-cut idea, such as those you might find in Murray Chandler's books *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess* and *Chess Tactics for Kids*. If you have seen the patterns before, then you should be able to find the right move without too much difficulty. If you are new to chess, then it will be much harder work.

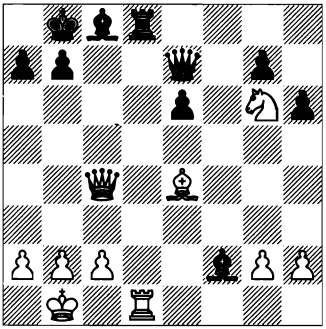
As you will see, many of these games featured very strong players, so you will appreciate that learning and recognizing tactical ideas is a great way to win chess games at any level, and not only when facing older family members!

Score 1 point if you have found the correct move in the diagram position, and seen the main reason why it is strong. Good club players should be able to solve all of these puzzles.

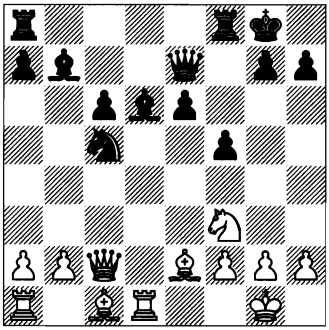


1 **White to play**
So – Laznicka
New Delhi 2011

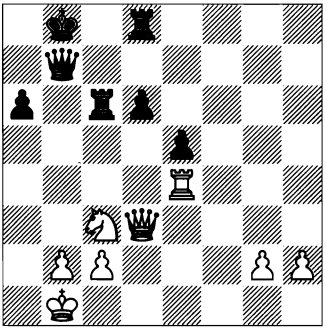
White's queen and knight are both attacked by the black rook, and it seems he must lose one of them. But after White's next move, Black resigned! What was this devastating blow?



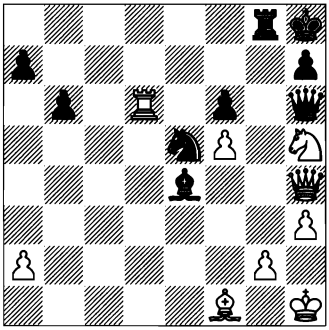
2 **White to play**
E. Berg – Kritz
Greek Team Ch, Eretria 2011
Care is needed as several pieces are under attack. Find White's knock-out blow.



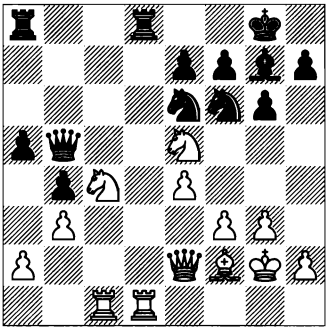
3 **White to play**
Lafuente – Tan Weiliang
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
How does White win material?



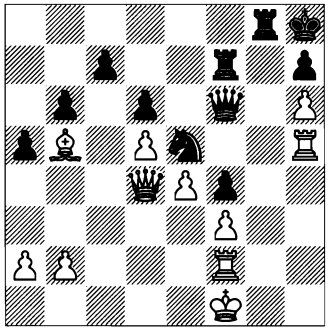
4 **Black to play**
Bindrich – Papp
Mitropa Cup, Chur 2010
It looks as if Black faces a tough technical task, but a neat piece of tactics makes the victory a simple matter.



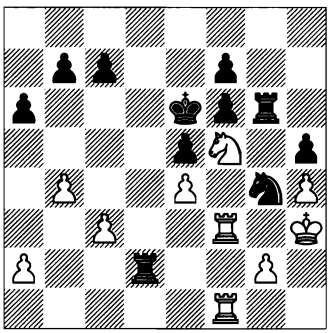
5 **Black to play**
M. Rodshtein – So
Biel 2010
The position is tense, with White threatening to take on f6. But it is Black's move – show how he wins.



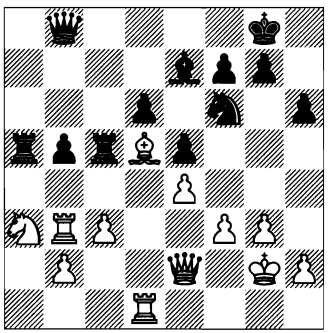
6 **White to play**
Navalgund – Padmini
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
White has a pleasant position, but can you see a way to win a valuable pawn?



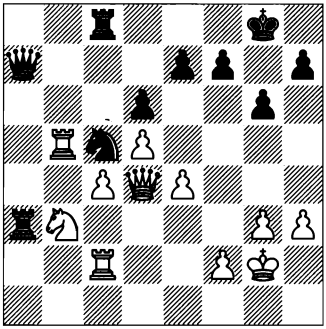
7 **Black to play**
Zhou Weiqi – Li Shilong
Chinese Ch, Xinghua 2010
How does Black win the white queen?



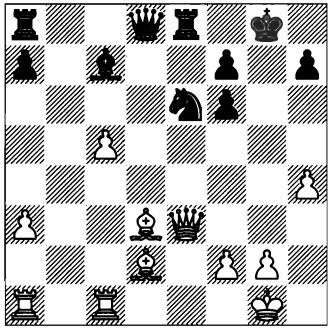
8 **Black to play**
M. Pap – Postny
Rethymnon 2010
Find a neat way for Black to turn his obviously better position into a clear-cut win.



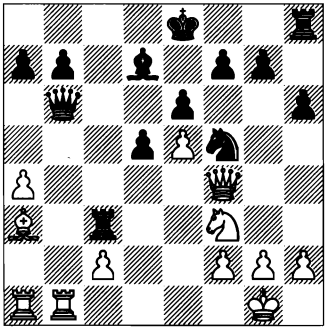
9 **White to play**
Palac – Brkić
Croatian Ch,
Marija Bistrica 2011
White now played a few ordinary moves and offered a draw. Show how he could have used a simple tactic to win material.



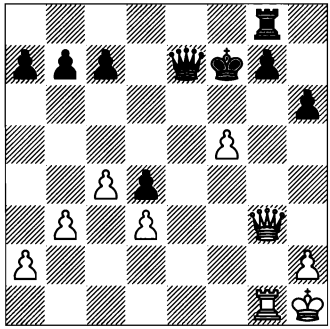
10 **Black to play**
Phiri – Shyam
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
Don't be confused by the tangle of pieces: a simple tactic wins for Black.



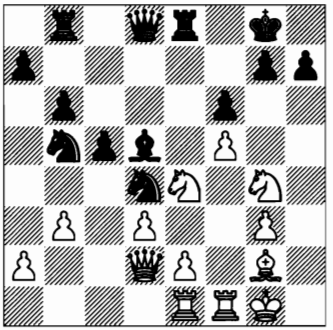
11 **Black to play**
Van Wely – Spoelman
Dutch Ch, Eindhoven 2010
How does Black win material?



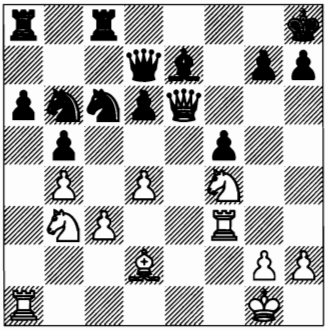
12 **Black to play**
Felgaer – Sengupta
Gibraltar 2011
Black needs to decide where best to put his queen ... or does he?



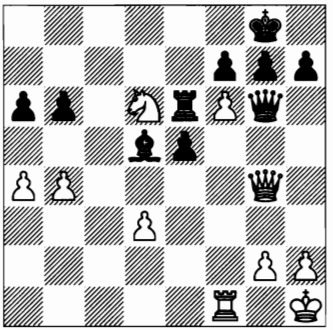
13 **White to play**
Ftačnik – Van Kampen
Amsterdam (3) 2010
Find the straw that breaks the camel's back.



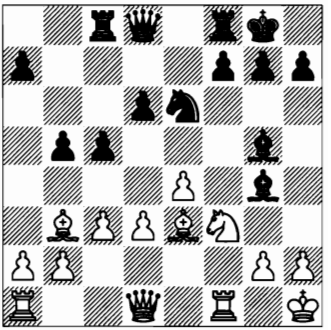
14 **White to play**



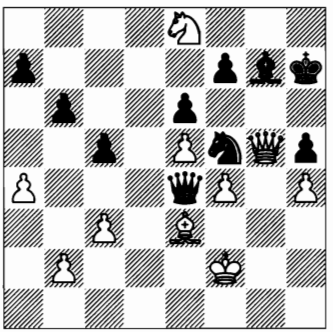
15 **White to play**



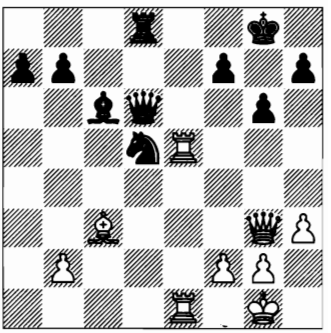
16 **White to play**



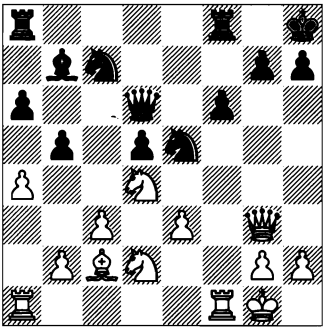
17 **White to play**



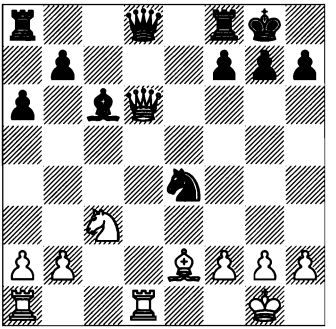
18 **White to play**



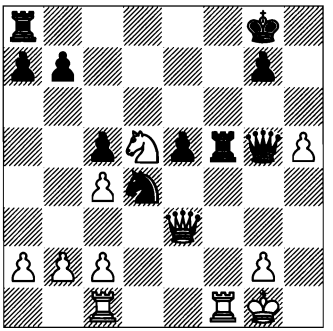
19 **White to play**



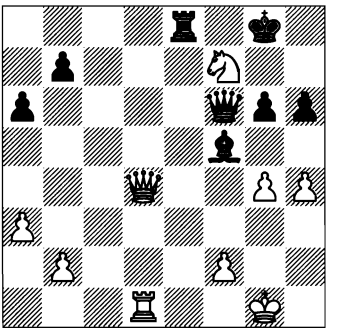
20 **White to play**



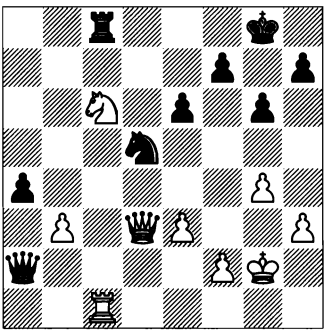
21 **White to play**



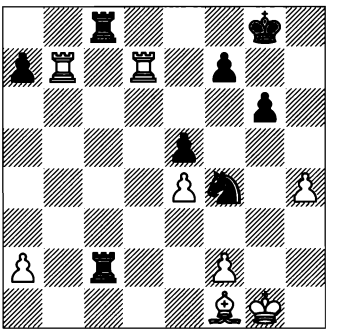
22 **Black to play**



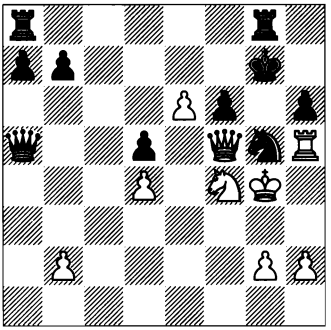
23 **Black to play**



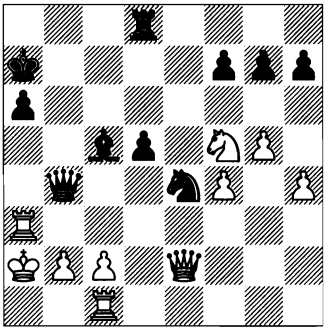
24 **White to play**



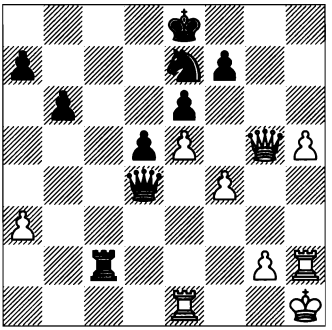
25 **Black to play**



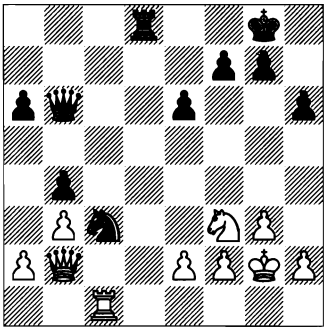
26 **White to play**



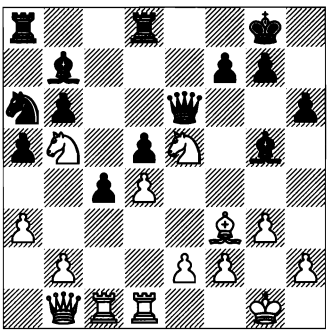
27 **Black to play**



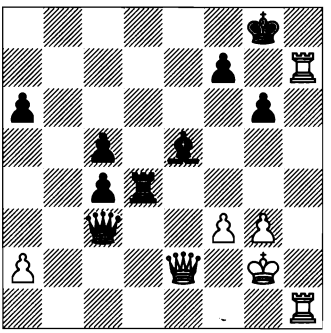
28 **Black to play**



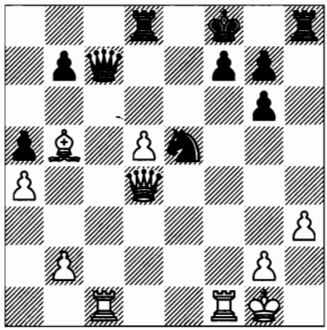
29 **Black to play**



30 **White to play**

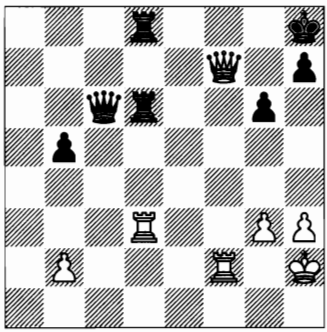


31 **White to play**

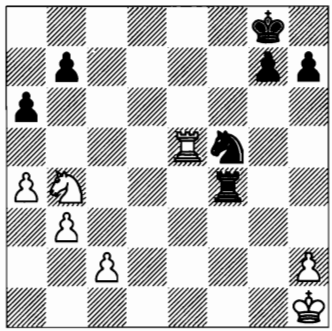


32 **Black to play**

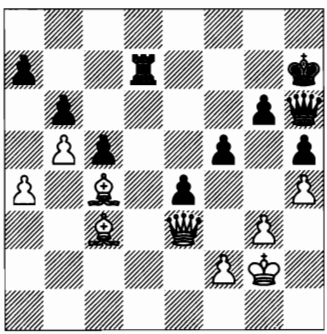
33 **White to play**



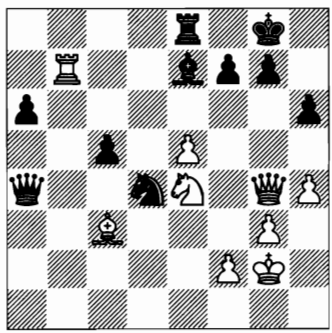
34 **White to play**



35 **Black to play**



36 **White to play**

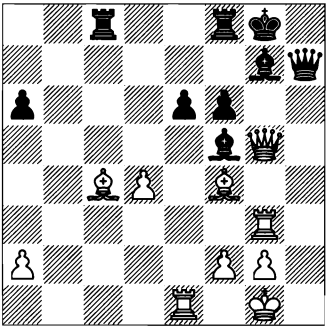


37 **White to play**

2 Putting Your Knowledge to Work

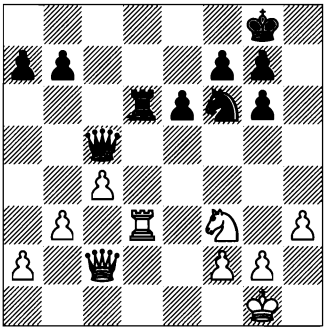
The following puzzles require slightly more calculation than those in the first chapter. The ideas may prove harder to see, as the patterns are not quite so standard. In many cases, a preparatory move (or tactic) is needed before the main idea can be played. In other words, you have to work a little to create a situation where you can make use of all those tactical ideas you have put so much effort into learning.

You get 1 point for finding the right move in the diagram position, as long as you have seen the main follow-up idea. Just ½ point if you have guessed the best move without understanding why it is so strong. Advanced club players should be able to solve most of these puzzles.



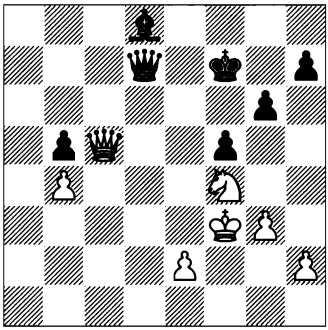
38 **White to play**
Akobian – Robson
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2011

White is a pawn up but his queen and bishop are both attacked. Presumably in time-trouble, the grandmaster playing White chose a way to liquidate to an ending where he could only draw. Show how he could have simplified to a won endgame.



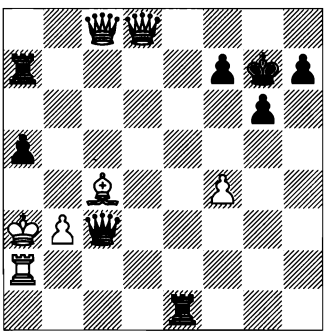
39 Black to play
Grachev – Inarkiev
Moscow 2011

Rather than allow White control of the d-file, Black chose 24...♕f5, seeking a comfortable ending after 25 ♖d2 ♕xc2. A good idea?



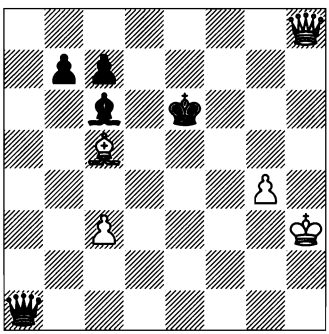
40 White to play
Ki. Georgiev – Lupulescu
Sarajevo 2011

Rather than repeating moves by 51 ♘d5 ♔e6 52 ♘f4+ ♔f7, White decided to try 51 ♘d3. Do you like this as a winning attempt?



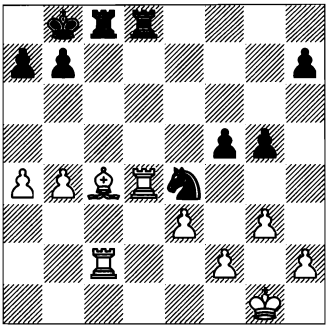
41 Black to play
S. Matiukhin – V. Grigoriev
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11

The game was agreed drawn here, even though White has two queens. Why? (Note: it's not a trick question!)

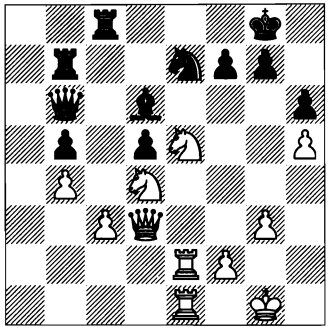


42 White to play
Krivoruchko – Bartel
Greek Team Ch, Peristeri 2010

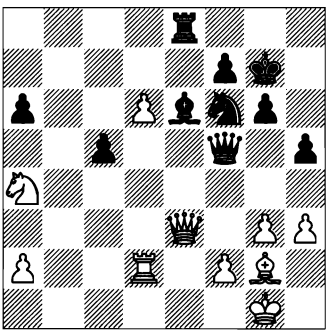
When both sides have just promoted, having the first check can prove decisive. But White must use this precious check wisely.



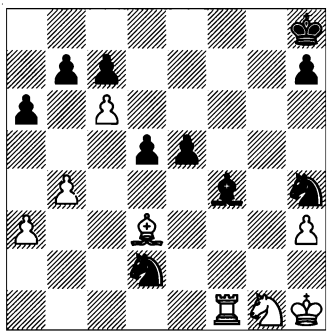
43 **White to play**
Vitiugov – An. Bykhovsky
Israeli Team Ch 2010
What is White's neatest way to round off the game?



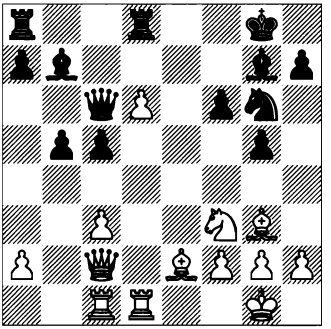
44 **White to play**
Adams – Akobian
Chicago 2010
White has a substantial advantage, but how does he win material immediately?



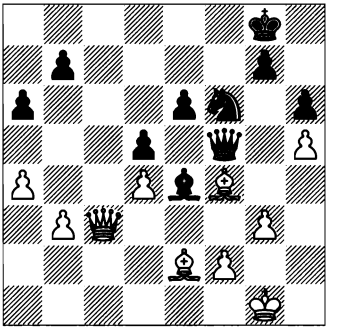
45 **Black to play**
Navara – D. Kononenko
Pardubice (rapid) 2010
Black clearly has a very pleasant position, but your task is to show how he could now have won on the spot.



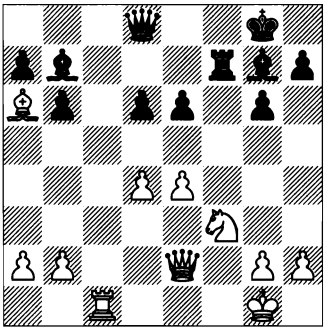
46 **Black to play**
Edouard – I. Kovalenko
Moscow 2011
White has just played 40 c6. What happens if Black takes the rook?



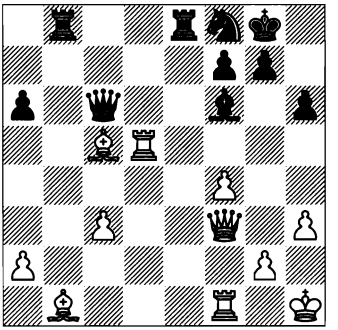
47 **White to play**



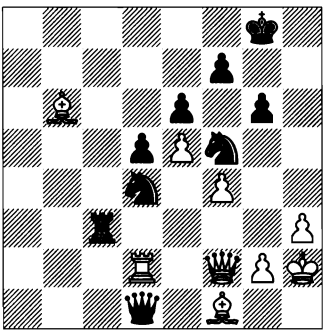
48 **Black to play**



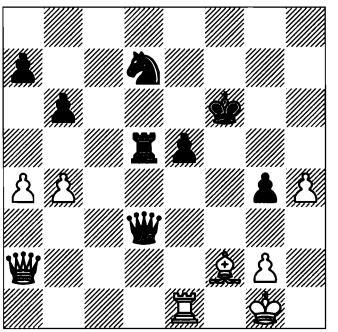
49 **Black to play**



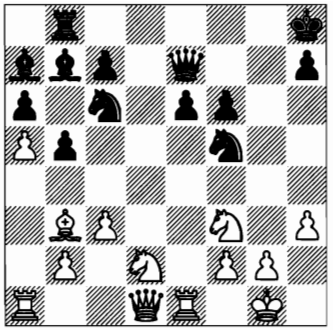
50 **Black to play**



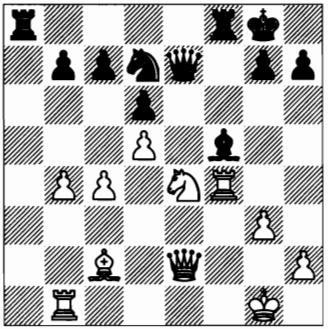
51 **Black to play**



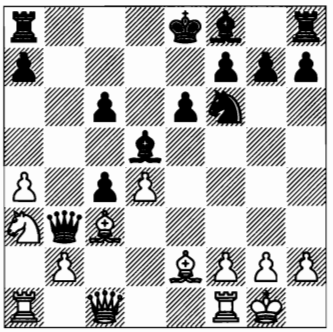
52 **Black to play**



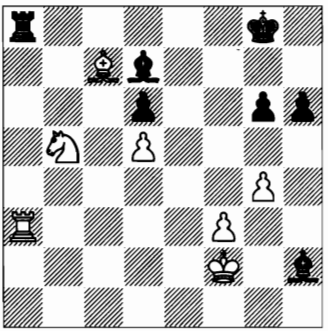
53 **Black to play**



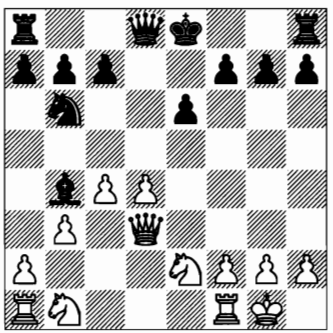
54 **White to play**



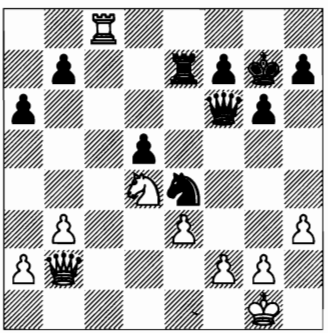
55 **White to play**



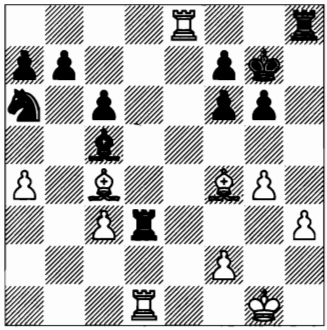
56 **Black to play**



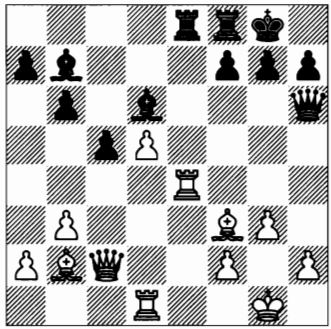
57 **White to play**



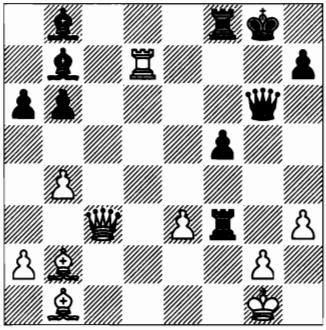
58 **White to play**



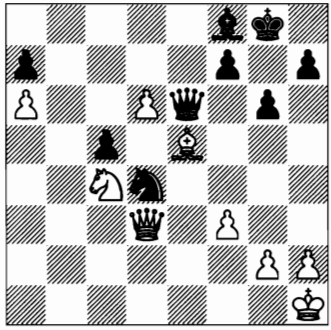
59 **White to play**



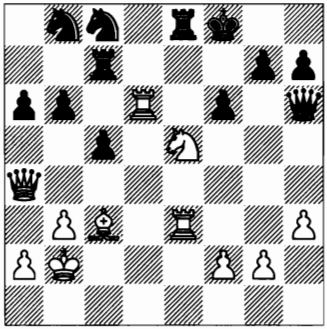
60 **White to play**



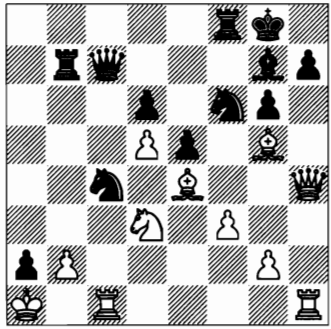
61 **Black to play**



62 **Black to play**



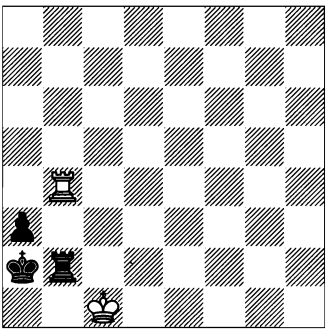
63 **White to play**



64 **Black to play**

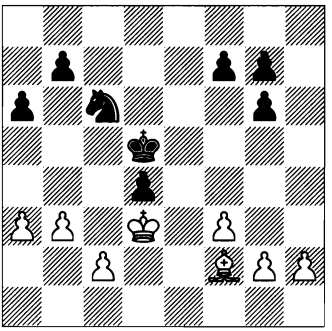
3 Endgame Skills

Endgames involve some beautiful ideas, but also require a lot of calculation and knowledge of key positions and manoeuvres. These puzzles test your skill in all these areas. The difficulty starts with Tricky and rises to Advanced within each section of the chapter (3 per page, 4 per page and 6 per page). Given this wide range, good club players should solve many of the puzzles, but struggle with others. Take 1 point for each correct answer (only ½ point if you guess right without seeing the main ideas). There are no *really* difficult endgame puzzles in this chapter – they can be found in Chapter 8.



65 **White to play**
Salgado Lopez – Berkes
Paks 2011

White must choose a square on the fourth rank for his rook. Of the seven possibilities, only one loses. Which one, and why? Be warned – based on the practical evidence, the wrong choice is very natural!



66 **White to play**
Abrahamyan – S. Foisor
USA Women's Ch, Saint Louis 2011

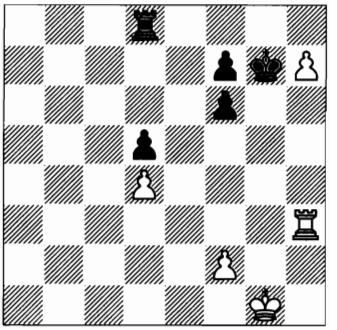
Material is level, White's bishop vs knight advantage appears balanced by Black's active pieces, and the isolated pawn looks far from weak. What would you recommend for White?

67 **White to play**

Hovhannisian – Melkumian

Armenian Ch, Erevan 2011

Rook endings are famously drawish, and here material is level, with White's sole passed pawn safely contained. But can you see a way that White might win this position?

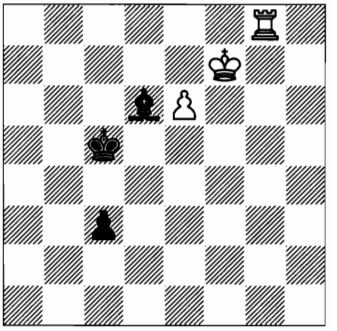


68 **White to play**

Melkumian – Vocaturo

Balaguer 2010

White *can* win this ending, but needs to find a precise move. Sometimes a slow-looking move gains time, whereas rushing in with an obvious idea can ruin everything.

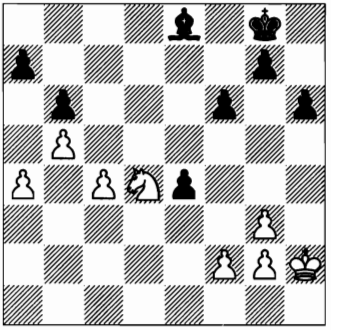


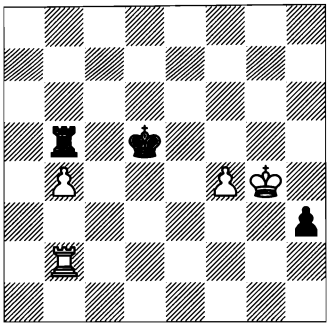
69 **Black to play**

Solodovnichenko – G. Meier

French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

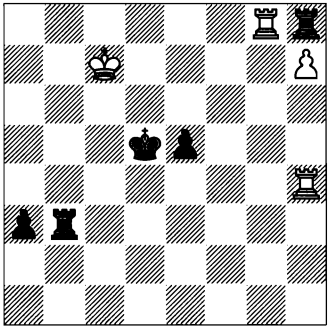
With bishop vs knight and pawns on both sides of the board, it is natural for Black to seek winning chances, especially as White's king looks inactive. So he tried 35...♗f7 – what happened next?





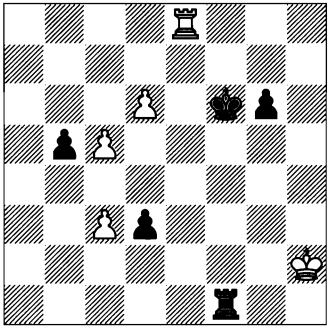
70 **Black to play**
Riazantsev – Khairullin
Moscow 2011

Black can draw here, and the lines involved aren't too complex. The challenge comes from knowing what you need to achieve, and what must be avoided.



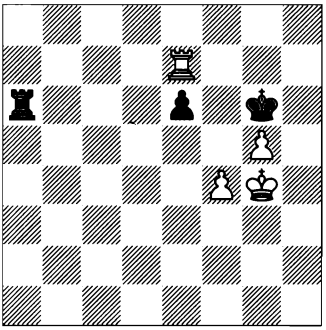
71 **Black to play**
Zelčić – Linchevsky
Oberwart 2010

In order to find a win for Black in this initially confusing position, you need to identify the features of the position that matter most.

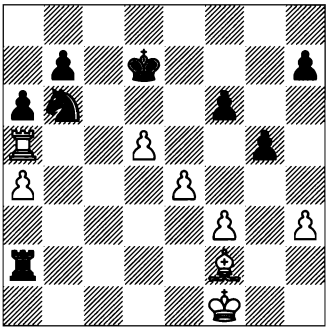


72 **Black to play**
Caruana – Lafuente
Gibraltar 2011

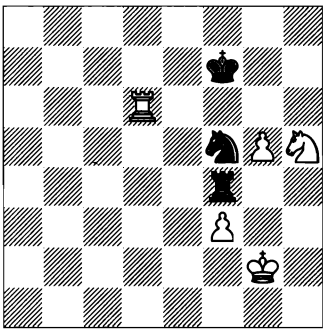
With pawns about to promote on both sides, the result hangs in the balance. Every tempo counts, and any idea to get the pawns through quicker needs to be considered. The GM playing Black lost in a few moves – can you do better?



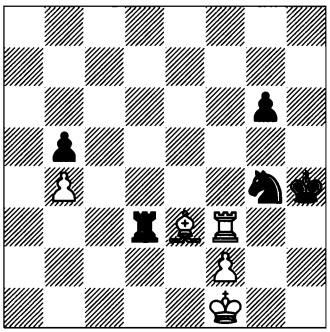
73 **White to play**
Wang Yu – Ruan Lufei
Hefei (rapid) 2010
Demonstrate a clear and simple win for White.



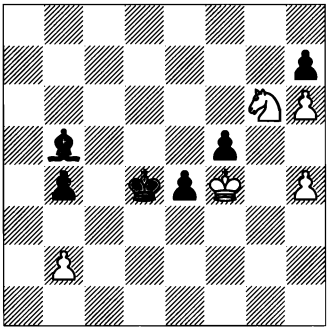
74 **Black to play**
Movsesian – Grishchuk
Odessa (rapid) 2010
Black has an obvious advantage, but how can he win the game cleanly at this point?



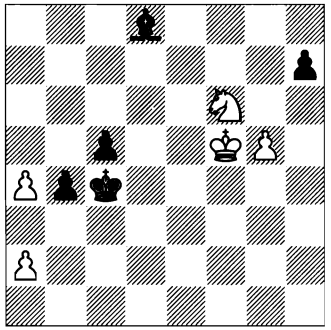
75 **Black to play**
Ragger – M. Krämer
Austrian Team Ch, Graz 2010/11
Black is two pawns down and an exchange of either rooks or knights is forced. Is it time for Black to resign?



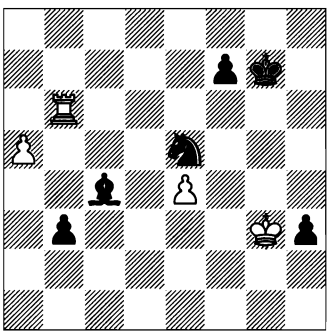
76 **Black to play**
Drljević – Panarin
Sarajevo 2010
What is Black's simplest and most convincing way to win this ending?



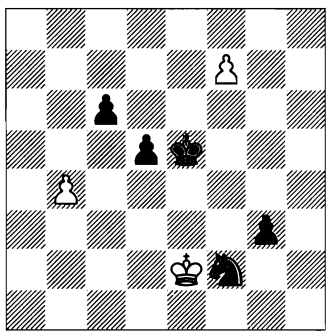
77 White to play
T.L. Petrosian – Kotanjian
Armenian Ch, Erevan 2011
Black's passed e-pawn looks much too fast. Should White resign?



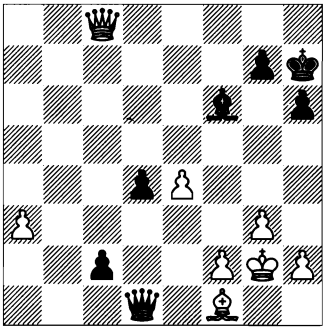
78 Black to play
Volokitin – Moiseenko
Ukrainian Ch, Kiev 2011
Seeing he can't queen first, Black liquidated by 39...b3 40 axb3+ ♔xb3 41 ♘xh7 ♗xg5 42 ♘xg5 ½-½. Did he have anything better?



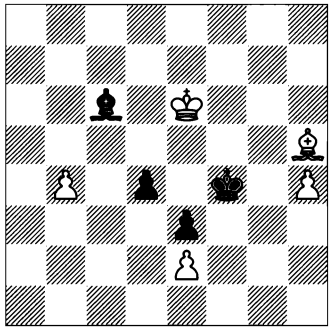
79 Black to play
Delgado Ramirez – Mareco
Asuncion 2010
Having missed a host of easier wins, Black has one last chance to punch home his advantage.



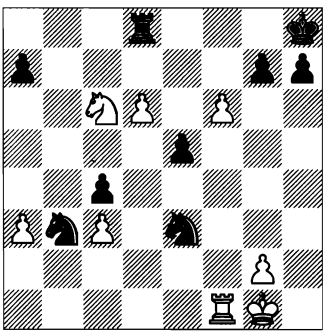
80 Black to play
Gaviota 0.81 – Daydreamer 1.75
tcec-chess.org (computers) 2011
White's f-pawn can't be stopped. Is it time for Black to resign?



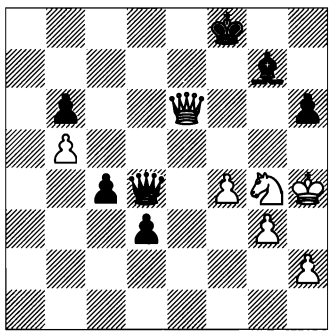
81 **White to play**
Fier – Willemze
Sarajevo 2010
White has a clear-cut win, but some imagination is needed to discover it.



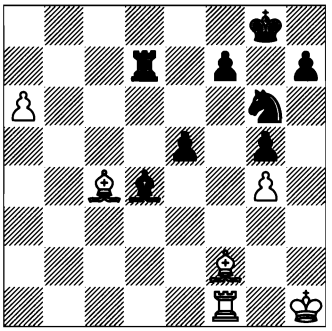
82 **White to play**
Calugar – M. Kleinman
Canadian Junior Ch, Toronto 2010
How does White save this desperate-looking situation?



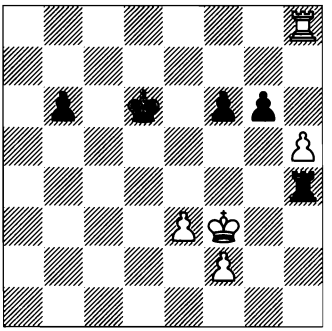
83 **Black to play**
Benjamin – Kraai
Saint Louis 2011
What is the only move that gives Black chances of surviving?



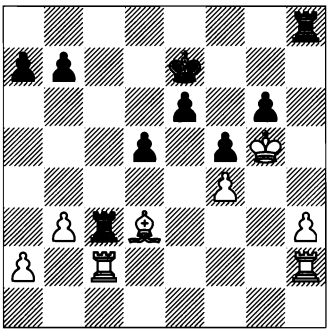
84 **White to play**
Maslov – Shtembuliak
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010
To avoid losing, White must coordinate all his pieces.



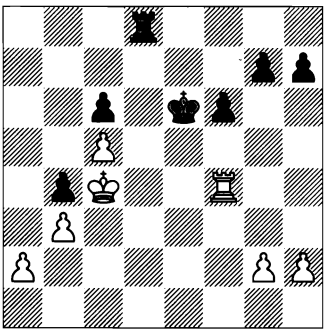
85 **White to play**



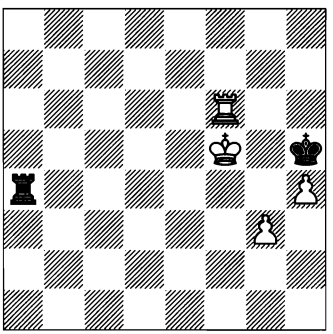
86 **White to play**



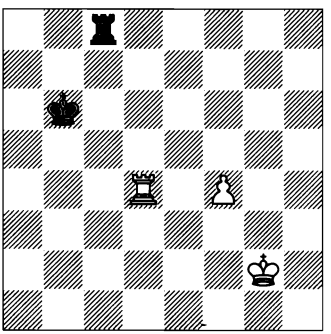
87 **Black to play**



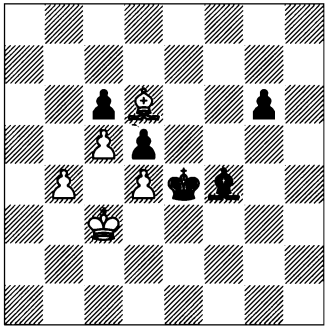
88 **Black to play**



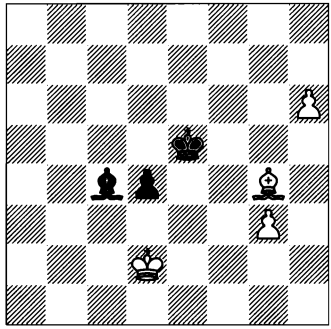
89 **Black to play**



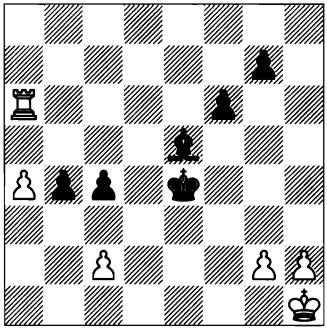
90 **Black to play**



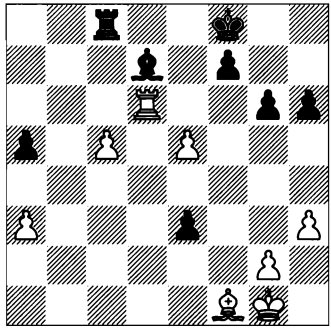
91 **Black to play**



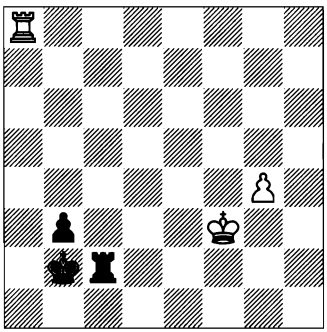
92 **Black to play**



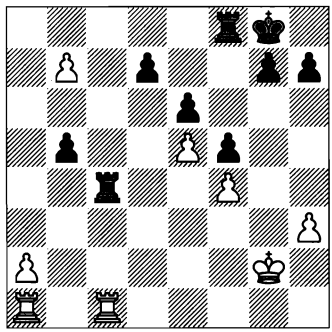
93 **Black to play**



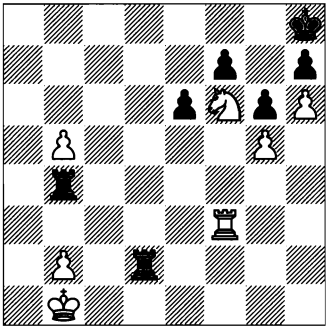
94 **Black to play**



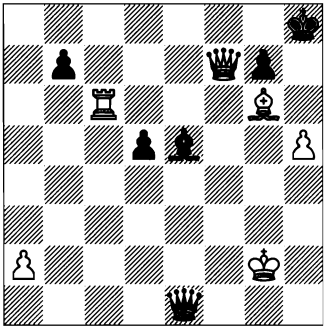
95 **Black to play**



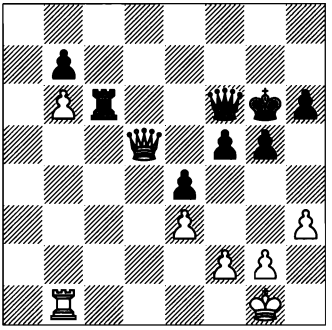
96 **White to play**



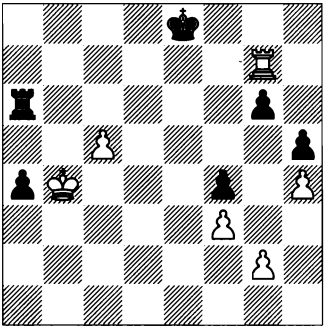
97 **White to play**



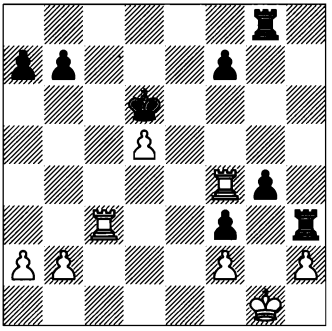
98 **Black to play**



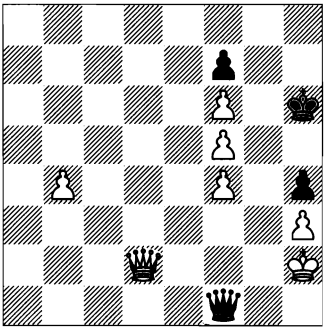
99 **White to play**



100 **White to play**



101 **Black to play**

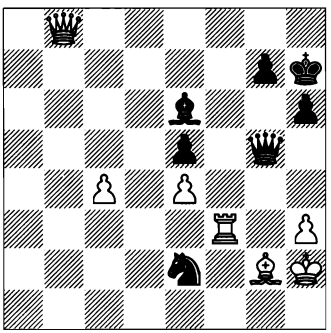


102 **Black to play**

4 Creativity

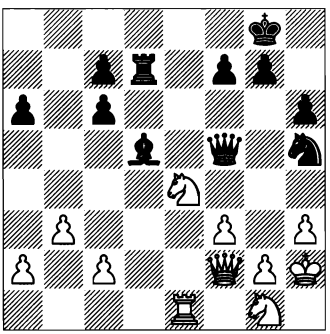
Some positions can't be handled correctly by using just direct logic and pattern recognition. Then we must use our imagination and create something new. This chapter contains puzzles that are mid-range in overall difficulty, but feature ideas that are easy to miss. Generally speaking, once you have seen the main idea, you have solved the puzzle. Take 1 point for a correct solution, or ½ point if you somehow found the right move without seeing all the ideas, or missed a key follow-up. Good club players should solve many of these puzzles, but may find others quite baffling!

103 **Black to play**
Miezis – Bischoff
Bundesliga 2010/11

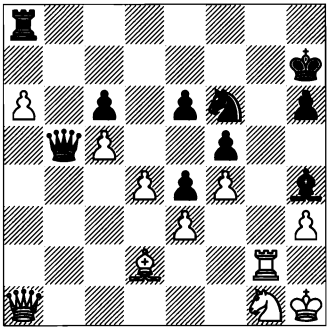


Black is an exchange down, and achieved a draw after 41...♘d4 42 ♖f8 ♘e2 43 ♖f3 ♘d4 44 ♖f8 ½-½. This seems a success, but could he have done any better?

104 **Black to play**
Kritz – Kapnisis
Greek Team Ch, Peristeri 2010

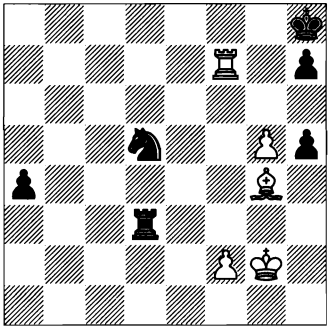


In this quiet-looking position, Black played 31...♖e7, looking to weaken White's structure by exchanging on e4. Was this a good idea?



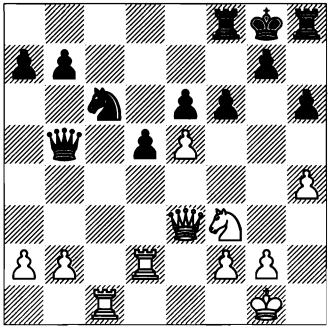
105 **White to play**
Ganaus – Bitalzadeh
Sarajevo 2010

The a6-pawn is doomed, White's bishop is bad, and a beautiful outpost on d5 beckons to the black knight. But it is White's move; how does he exploit his position's positive aspects?



106 **White to play**
Ivanisević – M. Neubauer
Sarajevo 2010

Do Black's active rook and knight, together with his strong a-pawn, mean that White is playing for a draw? Can you see any winning ideas?

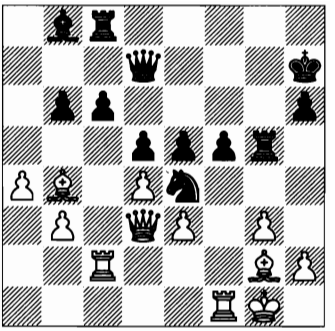


107 **Black to play**
Abrahamyan – Zatonskih
USA Women's Ch, Saint Louis 2011

Play now proceeded 23...♕b6 24 ♕e2 fxe5 25 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 26 ♕xe5, when White had at least enough activity and positional compensation for the pawn. Can you suggest a more ambitious idea for Black in the diagram position?

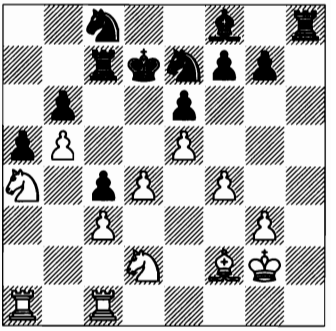
108 **Black to play**
V. Vaiser – M. Churkin
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11

Here's one you might find easier than your computer! Can you see a strong way for Black to continue his attack?



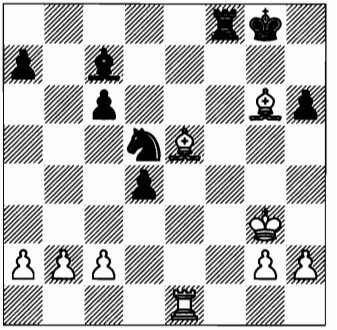
109 **White to play**
Shyam – Dzhumaev
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

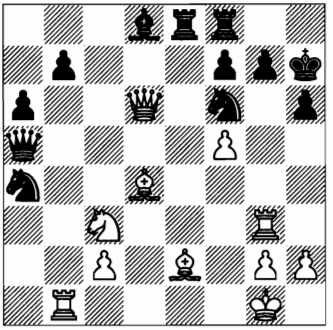
Find a vigorous way to make use of White's queenside pawns and take advantage of Black's sluggish development and awkwardly-placed pieces.



110 **Black to play**
Sutovsky – Vitiugov
Poikovsky 2010

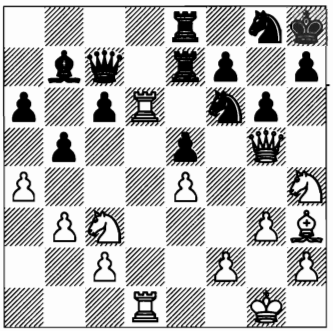
Black is a pawn down and appears to face a very unpleasant defence. However, there is a way he can turn the game in his favour.





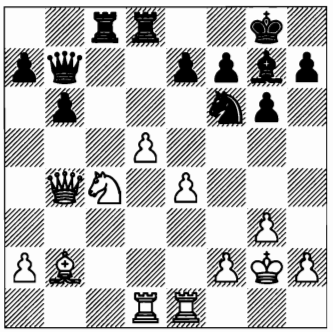
111 **White to play**
Ganguly – Spoelman
Wijk aan Zee 2011

Black has just grabbed a hot pawn, and is attacking several white pieces. The moment of truth has arrived: White must strike, and strike hard.



112 **Black to play**
Durarbeyli – F. Abbasov
Azerbaijani Ch, Baku 2011

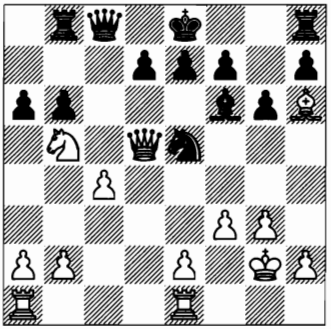
The most modest of tactical ideas can sometimes turn a game around. You're not looking for a dramatic winning idea for Black, but to find a way to put an end to the torture he has been enduring so far and obtain good play.



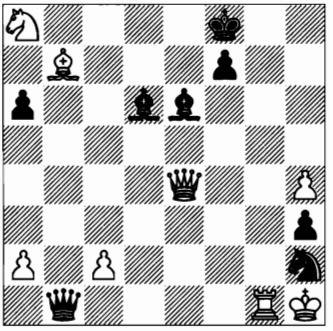
113 **Black to play**
D. Fridman – Buhmann
German Ch, Bonn 2011

White appears to have a firm grip on the position, with a strong centre and ideas like ♘a5 or ♘e5. Identify White's weaknesses and find Black's best move.

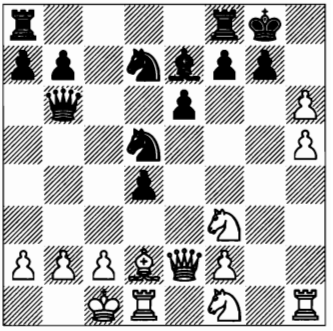
114 White to play
Rapport – Boros
Hungarian Team Ch, Mako 2010/11
White played 17 ♘d6+ exd6 18 ♕xd6, attacking the f6-bishop, and if it retreats then the e5-knight drops. Was this a good idea?

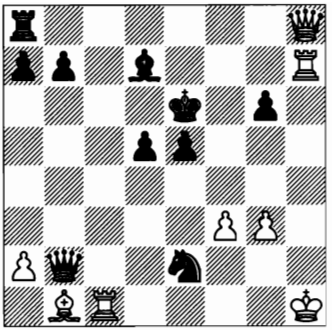


115 Black to play
Nisipeanu – Wojtaszek
European Ch, Aix-les-Bains 2011
It's hard to believe this chaotic position arose in a high-level game. White's king looks in danger, but his grip on the long h1-a8 diagonal could be a saving clause. Show how Black forces mate.



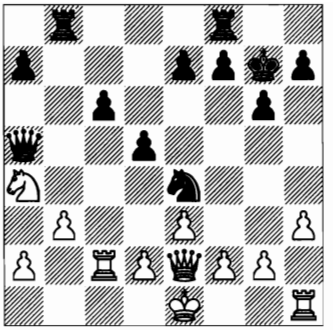
116 White to play
C. Balogh – M. Rodshtein
Wroclaw 2010
Here White played 18 ♕e4 and after 18...♘c5 19 ♕g4 ♗f6 20 ♗g5 ♘a4 21 ♗xf6 ♕xb2+ 22 ♔d2 ♕b4+ the game soon ended in perpetual check. Should White have played 18 hxg7 instead? If not, why not?





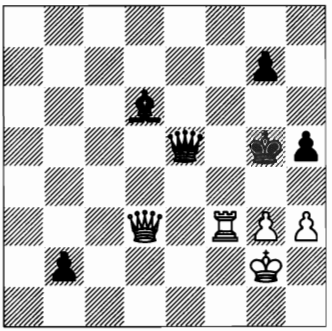
117 White to play
Oleksienko – A. Gupta
New Delhi 2011

At first glance it looks like White's attack has misfired. One star move is needed to clarify matters in his favour.



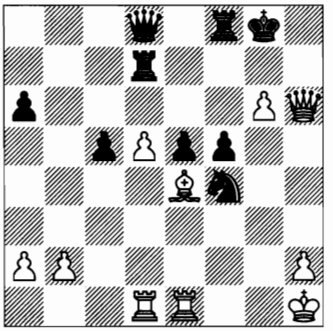
118 Black to play
Gelashvili – Šolak
Turkish Team Ch, Konya 2010

White has just defended his d2-pawn by 16 ♖c1-c2, preparing to castle. Show why this wasn't a good idea.



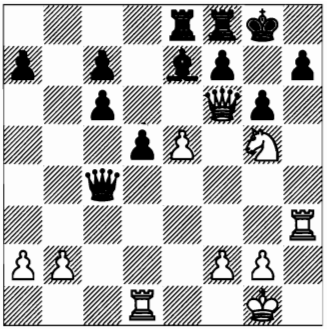
119 White to play
Bacrot – Shirov
Odessa (rapid) 2010

White took a draw by 54 ♖e3 ♕f6 55 ♖f3 ½-½. What win did he miss?

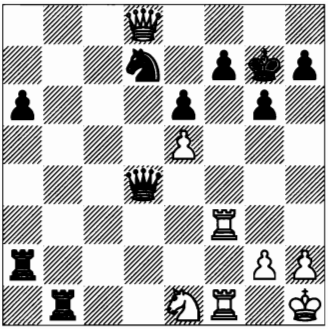


120 White to play
Harika – Prasenjit
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

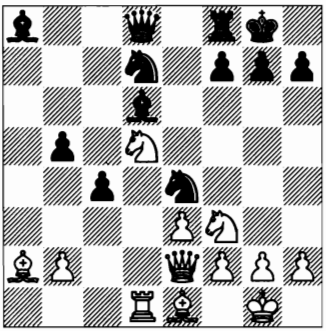
By playing 31 ♗f3?! White retained a significant advantage but missed a chance to force an instant win. How?



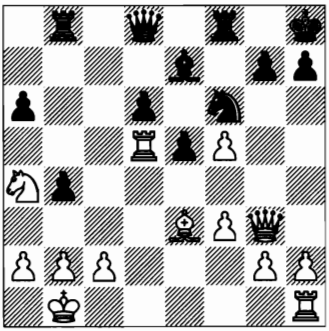
121 White to play
Vallejo Pons – Onishchuk
Reggio Emilia 2010/11
How does White add the finishing touch to his attack?



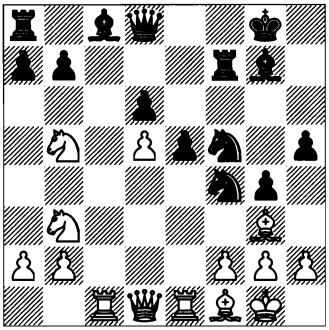
122 Black to play
Abrahamyan – Goletiani
USA Women's Ch, Saint Louis 2011
Black has a last chance to win what had a few moves earlier been an overwhelmingly won game.



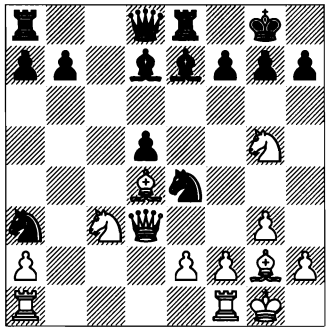
123 Black to play
Tratar – Gustafsson
Sarajevo 2010
How does Black win material?



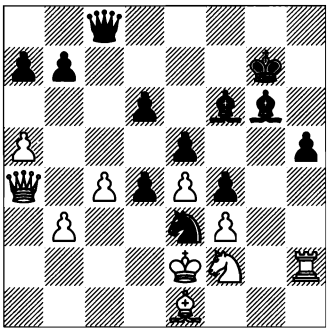
124 White to play
A. Sokolov – Zinchenko
Metz 2010
Show how White can secure a large advantage.



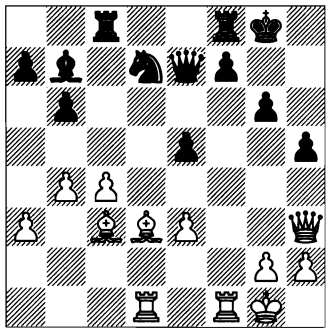
125 Black to play
E. Levin – S. Klimov
St Petersburg Ch 2010
Find a way for Black to take advantage of White's poorly-placed bishop on g3.



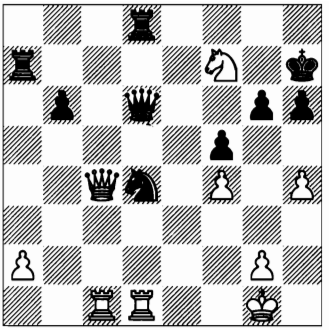
126 White to play
B. Grachev – Kriakvin
Russian Ch, Taganrog 2011
Black's position is clearly rather loose, and his pieces scattered. But how should White take advantage?



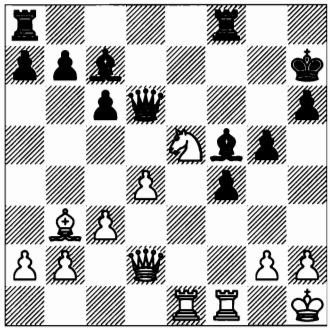
127 Black to play
A. Kovačević – Predojević
Sarajevo 2011
What is the best way to crack open the white king's defences?



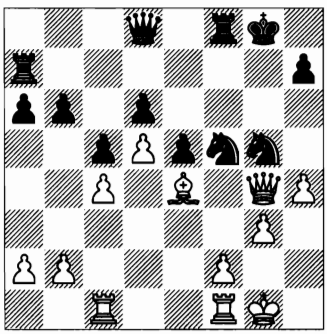
128 White to play
Morozevich – Khismatullin
Russian Ch, Taganrog 2011
How can White force an immediate win?



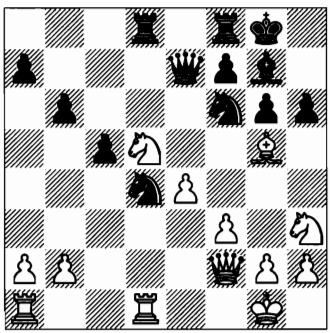
129 Black to play
Edouard – Riazantsev
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011
The situation looks desperate for Black. Is it time to resign, or can you see a way to hang on?



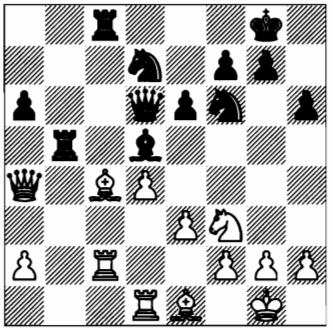
130 White to play
Kamsky – Christiansen
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010
Find a highly forcing, winning move for White.



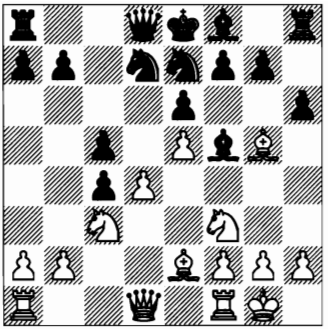
131 Black to play
Rybakov – Kotik
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010
Show how Black retains his extra piece.



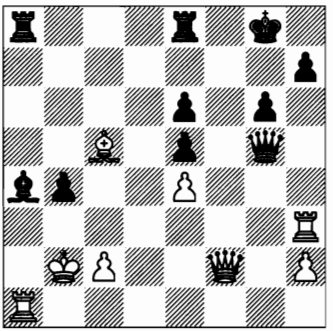
132 Black to play
Torre – V. Mikhalevski
Calgary 2010
How does Black win material?



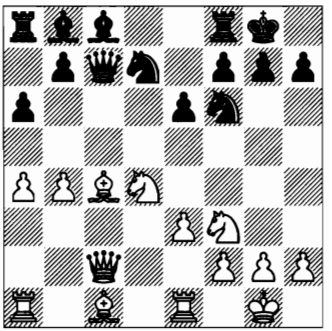
133 **Black to play**



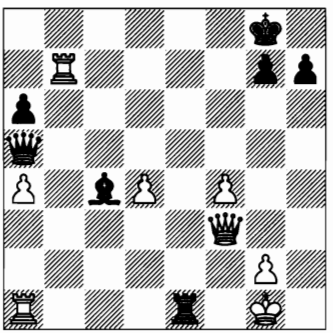
134 **White to play**



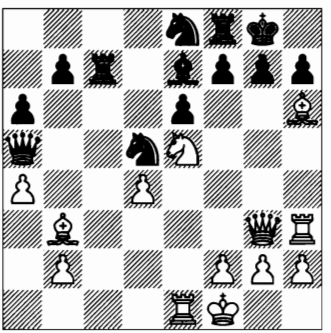
135 **White to play**



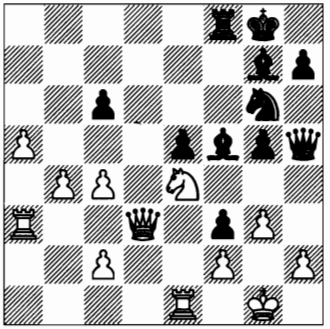
136 **Black to play**



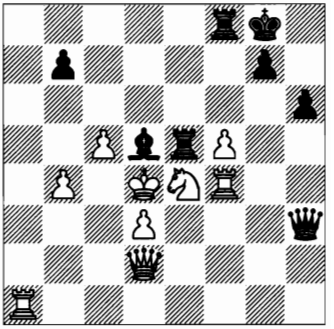
137 **White to play**



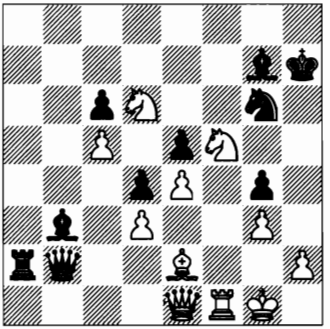
138 **White to play**



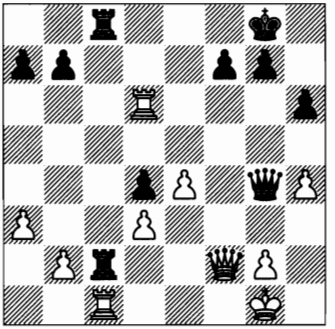
139 **Black to play**



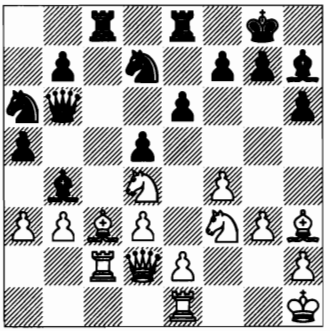
140 **Black to play**



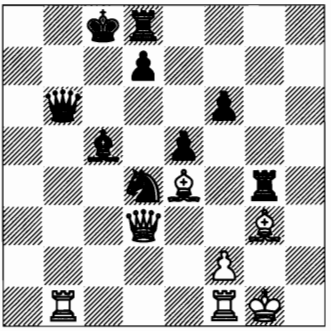
141 **White to play**



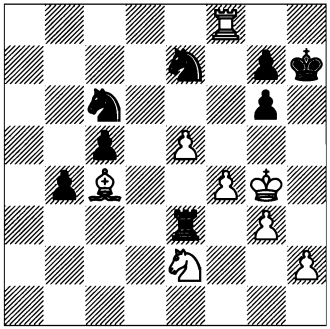
142 **White to play**



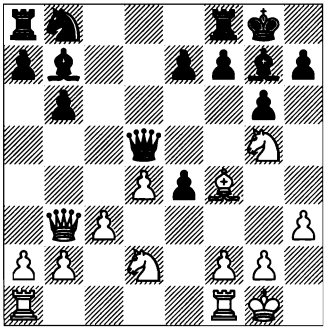
143 **Black to play**



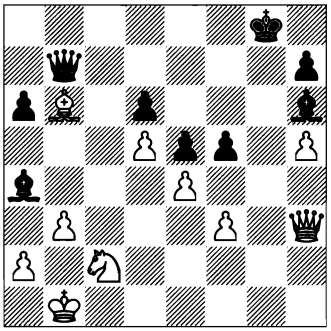
144 **Black to play**



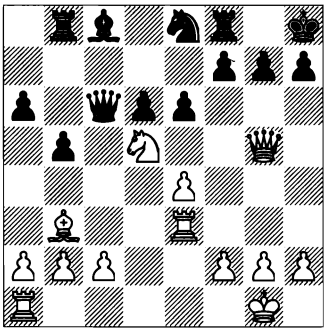
145 **White to play**



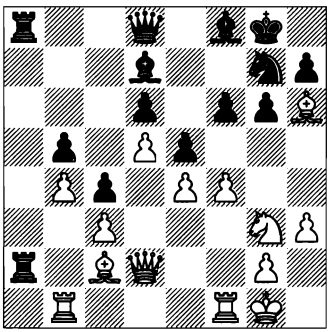
146 **Black to play**



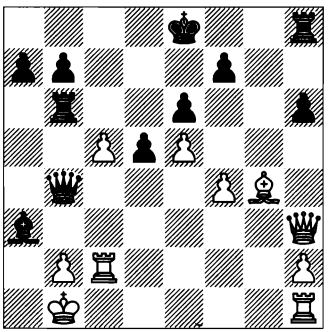
147 **White to play**



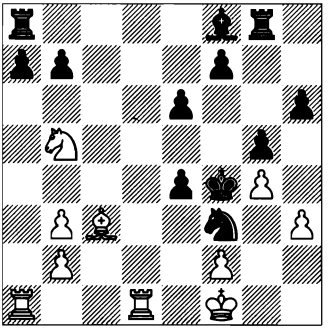
148 **White to play**



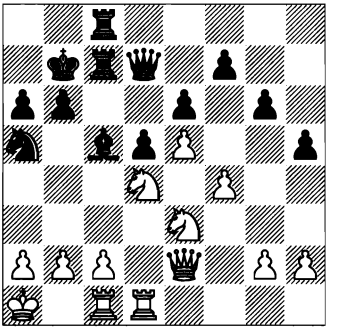
149 **Black to play**



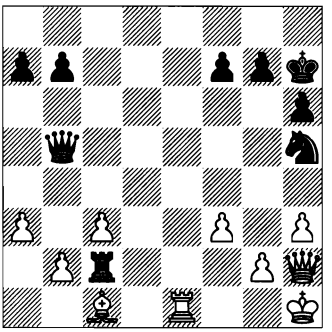
150 **Black to play**



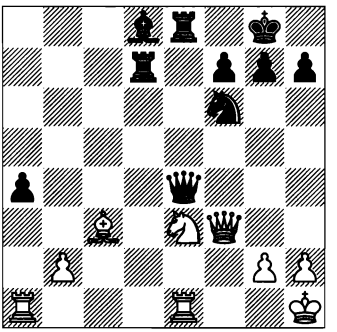
151 **White to play**



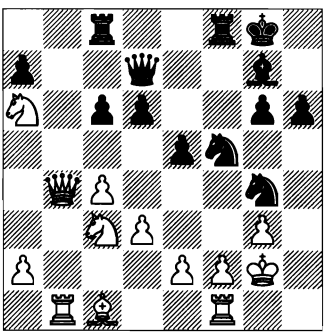
152 **Black to play**



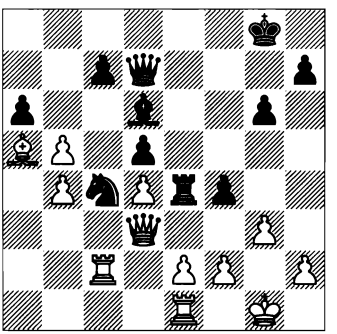
153 **Black to play**



154 **White to play**



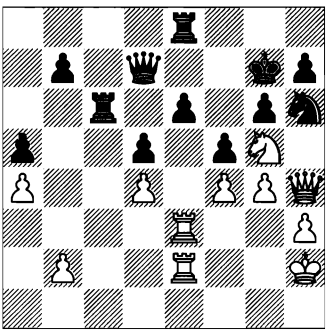
155 **Black to play**



156 **Black to play**

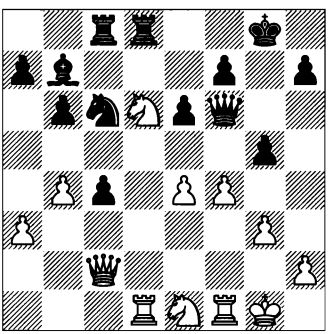
5 Attack, Defence and Counterattack

In every game of chess there are two players, each with their own aims and ideas. A resilient defender can save or even win desperate-looking positions, as many an overconfident attacker has discovered to his cost. These puzzles test your defensive cunning as well as your ability to storm the barricades. In some cases, your task is to find the only way to hold a position together. There are no very easy or ultra-hard puzzles in this chapter. 1 point for a fully correct answer; ½ for a good 'intuitive choice'.



157 **Black to play**
Kaidanov – Khachiyan
Saint Louis 2011

A successful pawn-break on a well-defended square is often a powerful idea. So choose between 30...e5 and 30...fxg4 31 hxg4 e5.



158 **Black to play**
Krasenkow – Macieja
Polish League, Wroclaw 2011

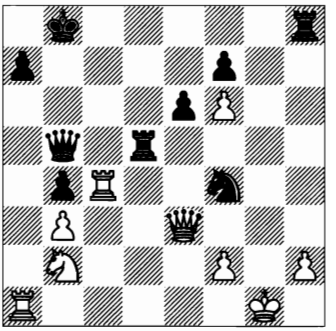
White has just sunk a knight into d6, and it seems that Black can look forward to nothing better than a grim defence. But can you find an idea that gives Black at least his fair share of the play?

159 **Black to play**

Vik. Balabanov – A. Fetisov

Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11

It looks like Black is in serious trouble, with mate threatened on a7, the f4-knight hanging with check, and the obvious direct attempts to mate the white king getting nowhere. It took one spectacular move to show that Black is not worse. What was it?

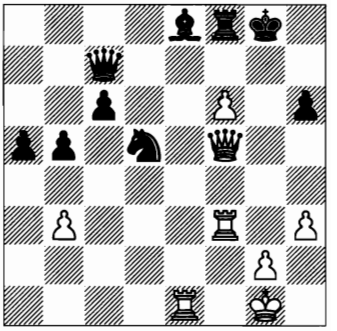


160 **Black to play**

Navara – Spoelman

Wijk aan Zee 2011

Find a way for Black to avoid immediate loss. Hint: identify White's threats, and find a way to parry them without allowing any new and deadly ideas.

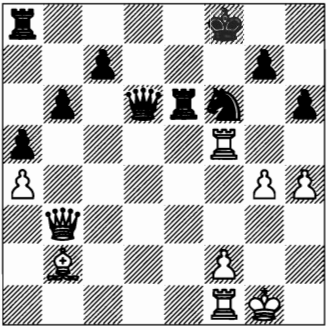


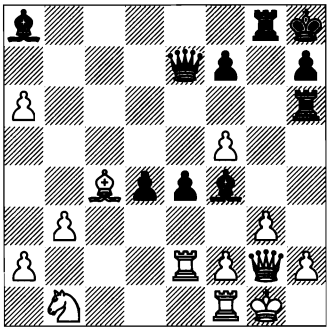
161 **Black to play**

Yu Yangyi – Dzhumabaev

Moscow 2011

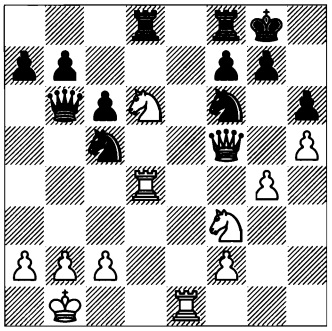
White threatens g5, and it isn't clear how the black king can avoid being caught in the crossfire. But maybe there is a saving counterattacking idea?





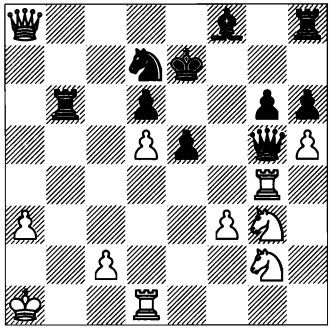
162 **Black to play**
Kurgansky – Pivinsky
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11

Black has been methodically bringing his pieces over to attack the white king, but his next move is not so obvious. One precise preparatory move is needed if the attack is to succeed.



163 **White to play**
Sengupta – Nisipeanu
Gibraltar 2011

Black intends to take some of the pressure off his position by 23...♘a4 or 23...♘d5. What's the best way for White to proceed: 23 ♖e7, hitting b7 and f7, or 23 g5, playing directly on the kingside? Analyse carefully!



164 **Black to play**
Trkulja – Djukić
Sarajevo 2010

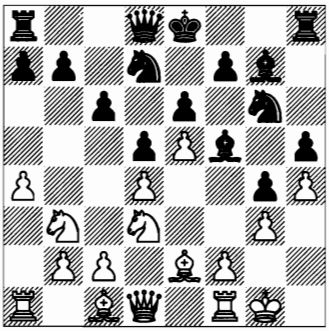
White is clearly vulnerable on the long diagonal. Black must avoid a hasty decision in this critical position and make the most of his threats.

165 **Black to play**

Al. Voronin – G. Goncharenko

Ukrainian Corr. Ch 2009-11

At a glance, White's position looks very solid. Show how Black can unbalance the position, and at least gain the initiative and give White serious practical problems.

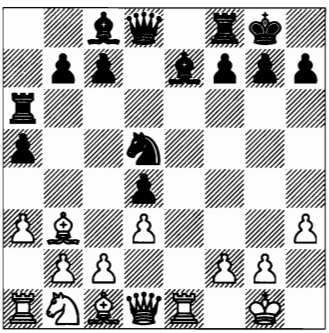


166 **White to play**

Radjabov – Ponomariov

Medias 2010

Black has just played 11...♖a8-a6. White replied 12 ♕f3. Did he miss a simple win of material by 12 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 13 ♖xe7?

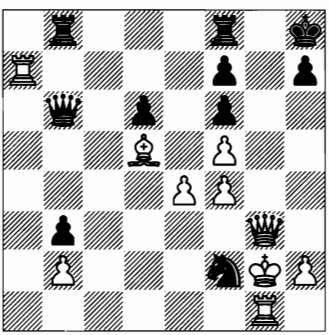


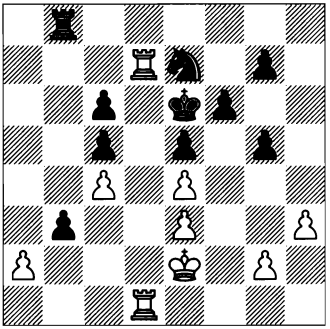
167 **White to play**

Sutovsky – Macieja

Italian Team Ch, Spoleto 2011

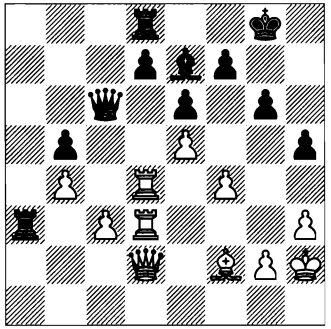
In the game, White now played a natural move that allowed Black to generate surprisingly strong counterplay. Can you find a stunning blow that would have sealed a crisp victory for White?





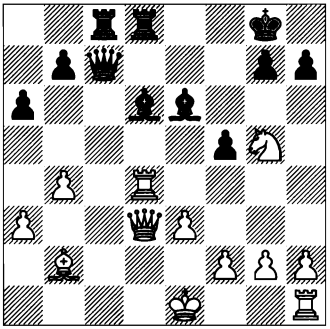
168 Black to play
Kadrić – Jovanić
Sarajevo 2010

Normal moves don't seem to get Black anywhere here. So is it time to resign?



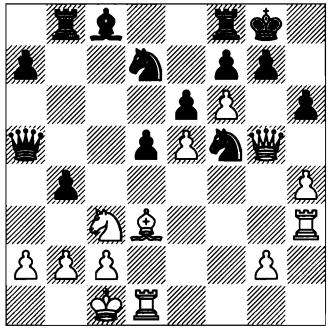
169 Black to play
Khadzh Khamed – Strygin
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

Is Black doomed to lose his backward d7-pawn for nothing?



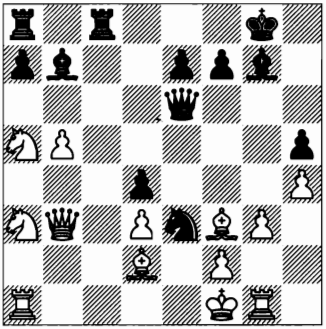
170 Black to play
Zherebukh – Linchevsky
Kirishi (juniors) 2010

Does Black have to allow the exchange on e6, with a grim defence ahead, or can he play more ambitiously?

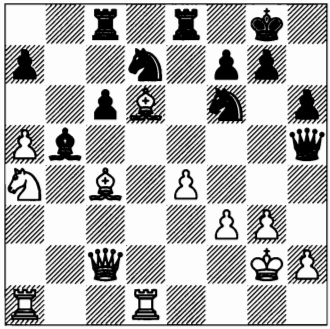


171 White to play
Shirov – Grachev
Lublin 2011

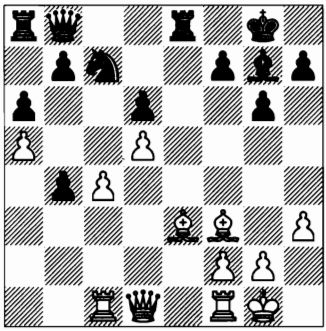
Is White winning, drawing or losing? Support your decision with a variation.



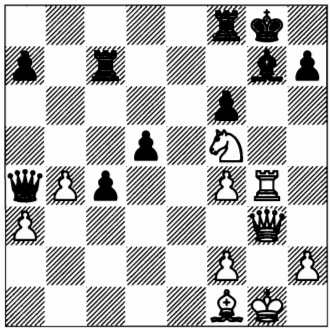
172 White to play
Markowski – Navara
Polish League, Wroclaw 2011
Black has launched an attack. But is it sound? Choose between 24 fxe3 and 24 ♗xe3.



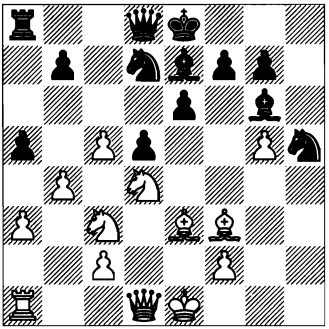
173 Black to play
Sashikiran – Yu Yangyi
Asian Ch, Mashhad 2011
Show how in this apparently unpromising position, Black can seize a powerful initiative.



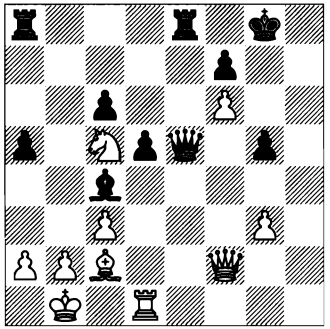
174 Black to play
Lalith – Agaragimov
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
How can Black take over the initiative and avoid an unpleasant defensive task?



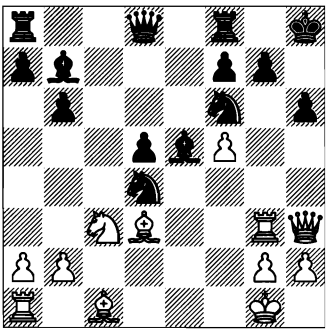
175 Black to play
D. Howell – Sandipan
Bundesliga 2010/11
What is the best way to meet the threat against g7?



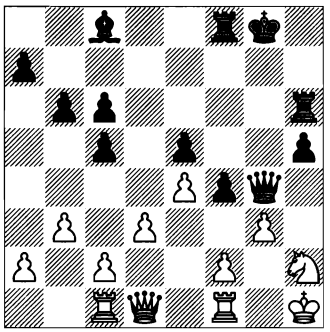
176 Black to play
V. Baklanov – Vik. Balabanov
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11
Black appears to be in deep trouble. How does he save himself?



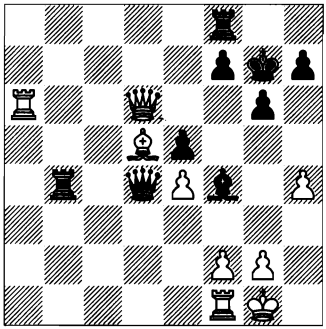
177 Black to play
Sai – Swapnil
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
Black has just one way to hang on. Can you find it?



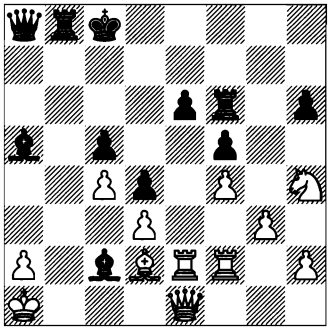
178 White to play
Peralta – Navara
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011
Already a piece down, White is fully committed to his attack. Choose between 17 ♖xg7 and 17 ♗xh6. Clue: one of them loses.



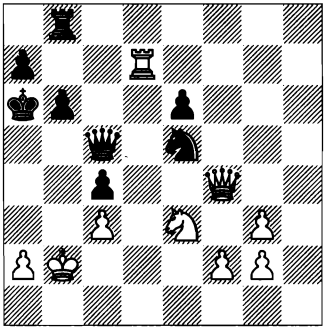
179 Black to play
V. Baklanov – Kurgansky
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11
How should Black press home his attack?



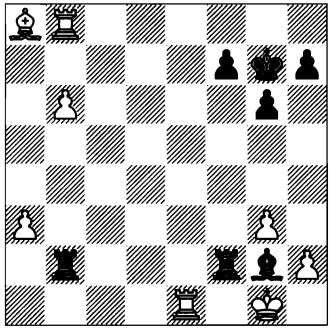
180 Black to play
Sirobaba – Shkabatur
Ukrainian Corr. Ch 2009-11
Choose between 31...♖bb8 and 31...♖fb8.



181 White to play
Stripunsky – Nakamura
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010
Things look desperate for White; can you see a way to save the day?

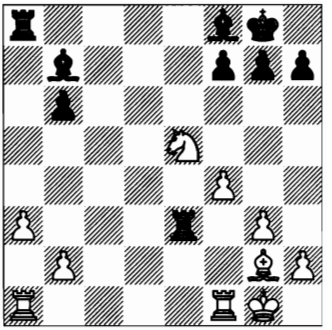


182 White to play
Hodžić – Fier
Sarajevo 2010
White is under serious pressure. Keep your cool, and find the best defence.

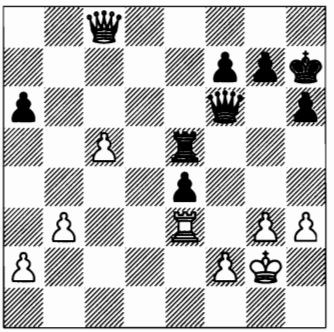


183 White to play
A. Sarić – Vuilleumier
Sarajevo 2010
Show that, despite appearances, White is no worse.

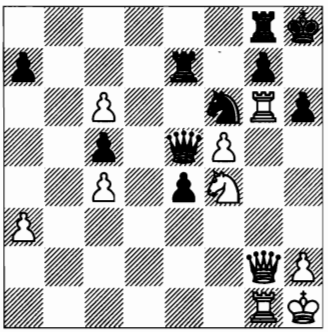
The five puzzles on this page are all on the theme of defence and counterattack – that is, your task is to hold a difficult position, or turn the tables by launching a counterattack.



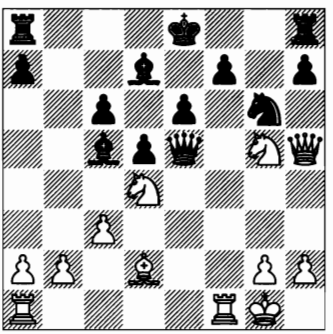
184 **Black to play**



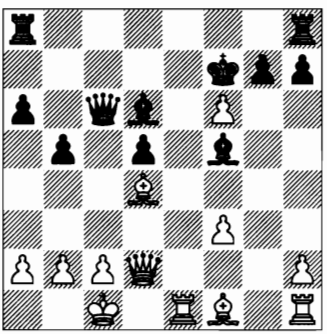
185 **Black to play**



186 **Black to play**

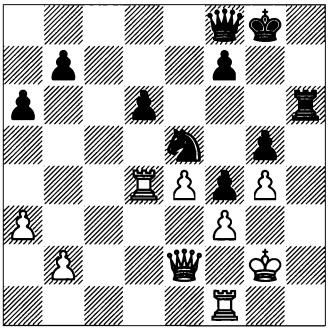


187 **Black to play**

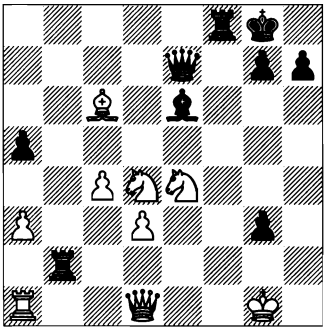


188 **Black to play**

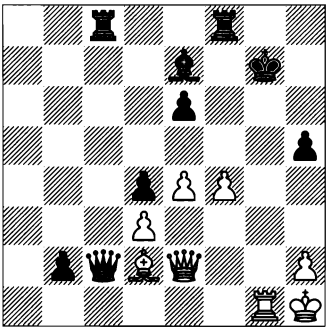
The final five puzzles in this chapter are more complex than those on the previous page. You may need to analyse a number of variations in some depth to be sure of the assessment and the best continuation, even if you feel you can guess the first move. The first is on the theme of 'attack', while the remaining four are 'defence and counterattack'.



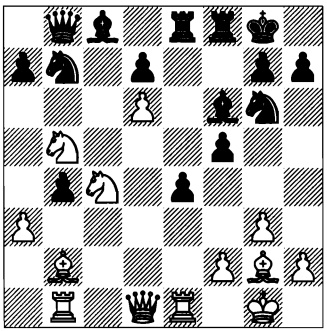
189 **Black to play**



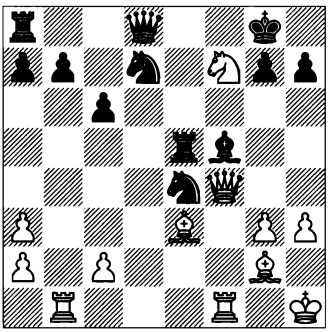
190 **White to play**



191 **Black to play**



192 **Black to play**



193 **Black to play**

6 Vision

The last three chapters of the book could be labelled 'The Fine Art of Seeing a Few Moves Ahead'. Being able to envisage a position at the end of a variation is a vital chess skill that sets top players apart from amateurs. I hear you protesting "But surely when we solved the checkmate and tactics puzzles in Chapter 1, we were seeing a few moves ahead!" True, but if you only need to verify that the enemy king is mated, or that you are a rook ahead in a quiet position, you need no more than a fuzzy image. When the target position demands a more finely-tuned assessment, it can feel as if fog has descended, and our brain almost stops functioning. Somehow, top players keep a clear picture in their mind, as we can see from the quality of their play even in blindfold games.

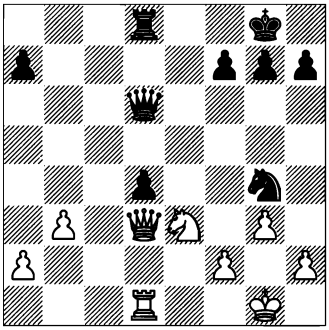
One way to develop this skill is by playing blindfold chess yourself. You'll probably find that you manage better than you expected, and improve rapidly. Or play through games and variations from a book in your mind's eye, and see how far you can follow them before you lose track of the position. You should find that with some practice, you are able to 'refocus' on a position several moves ahead. At the board, the time to refocus will be well spent if the improved view helps you get a critical decision right.

These final three chapters provide opportunities to develop your chess vision. You will need to analyse numerous possibilities that lead to positions which require further assessment or calculation. In some cases, the solution is a 'resulting move' – a concept discussed by Valeri Beim in *How to Calculate Chess Tactics*. These are moves that don't initially appear to have much purpose, but are ideas sparked by your analysis of the more natural moves. Often a resulting move prevents counterplay, or rules out a defence that is preventing you from implementing your main ideas.

This chapter features puzzles that are mid-range in difficulty and complexity. You get 1 point for finding the correct move or giving the right answer to a question. There is an additional 1 point for seeing the main ideas and analysing the most critical of the supporting variations.

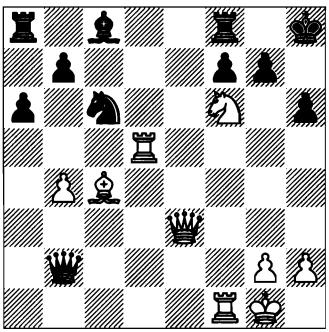
194 **Black to play**
Burmakin – Shaposhnikov
Voronezh 2010

White is trying to apply pressure to Black's isolated d-pawn, but Black can strike with a devastating tactical blow. What is it?



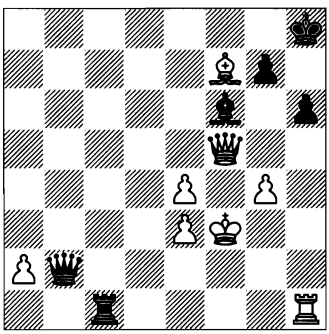
195 **White to play**
Ter-Sahakian – Kotanjian
Armenian Ch, Erevan 2011

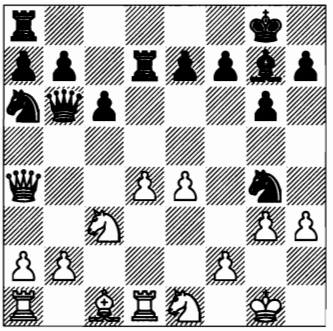
How should White pursue his attack? Think about what is preventing him from crashing through immediately, and how this problem can be remedied.



196 **Black to play**
Dzhumabaev – Maletin
Moscow 2011

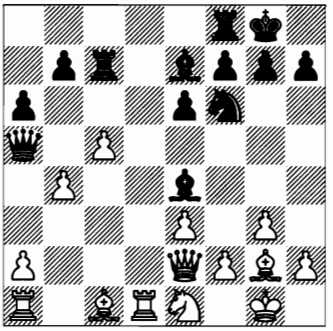
There are threats to both kings, so care is needed. Black has only one good move; everything else loses. What is this killer move?





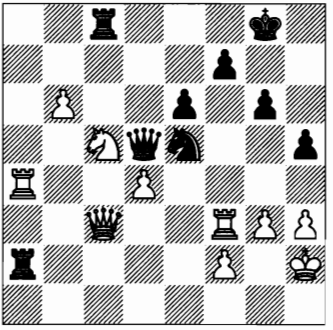
197 **Black to play**
Gajewski – Janković
Cappelle la Grande 2011

Naturally, Black does not want to retreat his knight, as this leaves White's centre unchallenged. But is there a good way to exploit the weakness of f2 and d4?



198 **Black to play**
Miroshnichenko – Gagunashvili
Turkish Team Ch, Konya 2011

Black chose 18...♕a4, and ended up defending an unpleasant pawn-down ending. Was there a good reason not to play 18...♕xb4 instead?



199 **White to play**
Bologan – Jobava
Poikovsky 2010

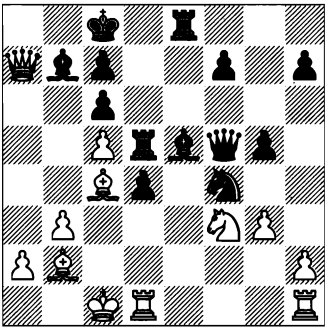
The number of *en prise* pieces makes the position initially quite confusing, but the variations are not too complex. Your task is to find a clear-cut win for White.

200 **Black to play**

Macieja – Grandelius

Stockholm 2010/11

A number of Black's pieces are under attack, but White's king is exposed and his queen is far away. How can Black take advantage in dramatic fashion?

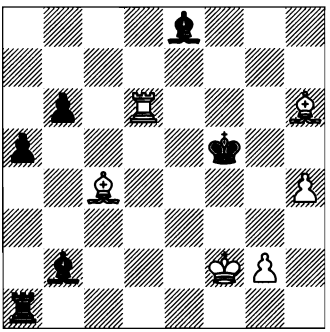


201 **White to play**

Ragger – Greenfeld

New Delhi 2011

It may seem unlikely that White is able to force an immediate win, but Black's loose pieces and his king's shortage of squares should provide useful clues.

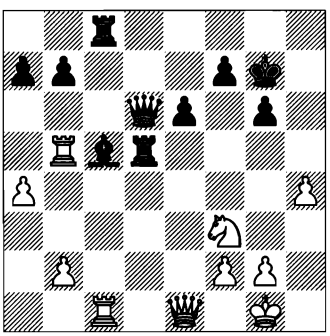


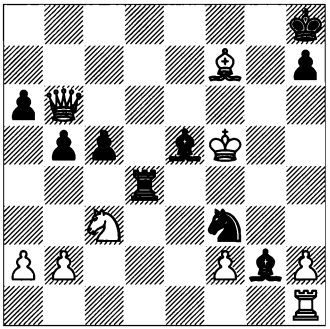
202 **Black to play**

Melkumian – T.L. Petrosian

Armenian Ch, Erevan 2011

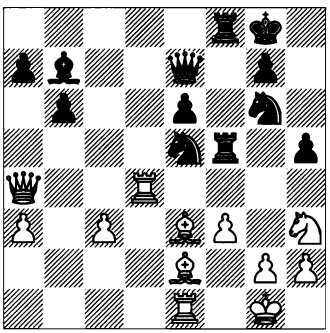
Black has a strong position, but with his next move he missed a chance to win the game immediately. Can you do better?





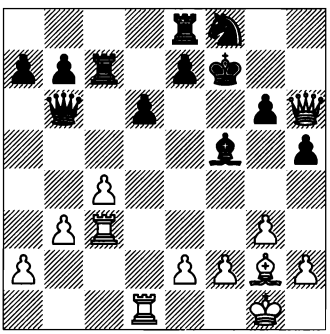
203 **White to play**
Cabrera – Sandipan
Gibraltar 2011

Black is threatening mate in one, which limits White's choice. But some careful analysis is still needed to choose White's next move.



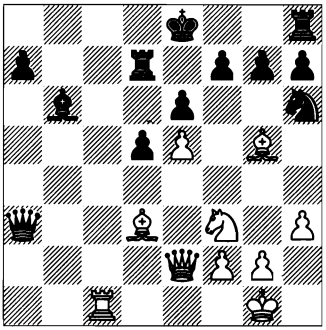
204 **Black to play**
Timofeev – Siugirov
Moscow 2011

It might seem that White's kingside is only slightly weakened, but note how much black firepower is targeting it. Show how Black can force a large advantage.

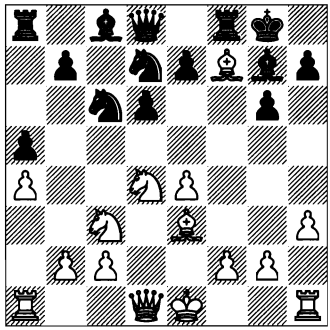


205 **White to play**
A. Schön – Ruggeri Laderchi
World Corr. Ch Candidates 2010-11

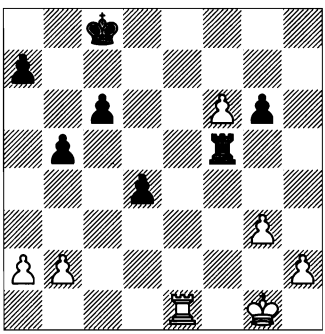
White has just sacrificed a knight on f7. What is the follow-up to exploit the exposure of the black king?



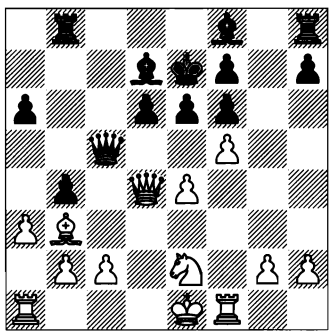
206 White to play
Kislinsky – Volovikov
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010
Which of 22 ♖c8+ and 22 ♗b5 is the more convincing way to exploit Black's delay in castling?



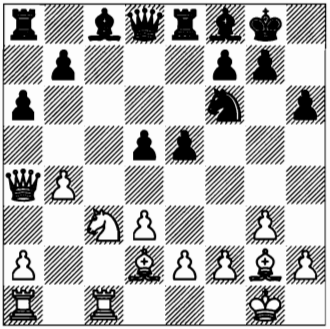
207 Black to play
N. Mitkov – V. Mikhalevski
Chicago 2010
White is attempting to employ a well-known tactical idea. But is it sound here? How should Black capture the bishop?



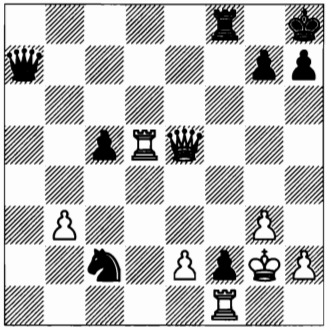
208 White to play
Dreev – C. Bauer
Swiss Team Ch 2011
White seems doomed to lose his f6-pawn. Do you see any hope for him?



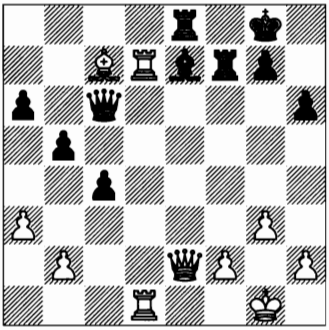
209 White to play
A. Sokolov – Leon Hoyos
Metz 2010
How can White win a pawn?



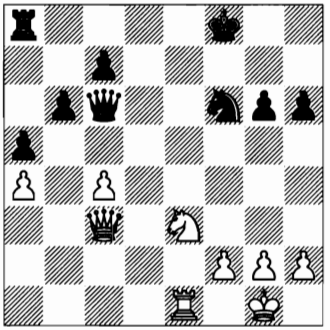
210 White to play
Daydreamer 1.75 – Scorpio 2.7
tcec-chess.org (computers) 2011
Can White now win a pawn by 15 ♘xd5, based on overloading the black queen?



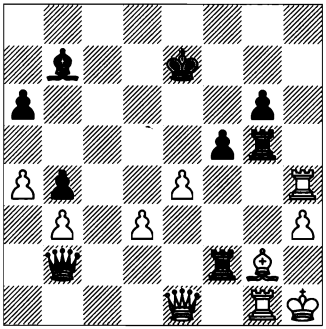
211 Black to play
M. Rodshtein – Baklan
Wroclaw 2010
Black chose 34...c4?!, missing a sneaky chance to win cleanly. Can you do better?



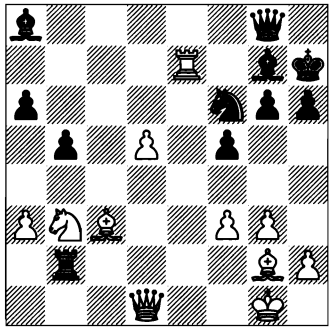
212 Black to play
Postny – Macieja
Greek Team Ch, Peristeri 2010
How can Black pocket a useful pawn?



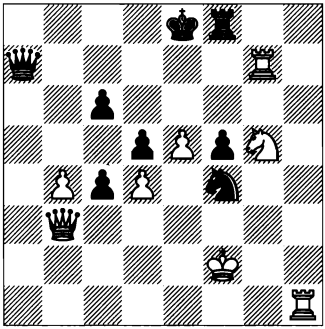
213 White to play
Karakekhayov – N. Mamedov
Turkish Team Ch, Konya 2010
A surprising blow brings Black's defences tumbling down.



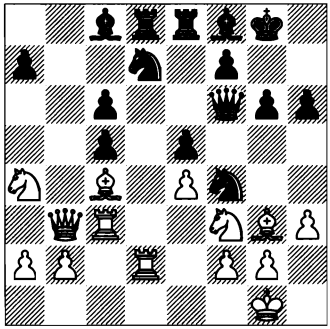
214 Black to play
Movsesian – Sandipan
Moscow 2011
Should Black secure the b4-pawn or take on g2 without more ado? If so, with which rook?



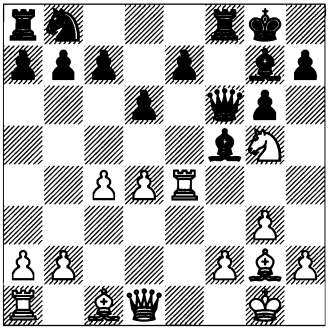
215 Black to play
Ruggeri Laderchi – J. Novak
World Corr. Ch Candidates 2010-11
With his rook and knight attacked, Black appears to be in deep trouble. Can you see how he survived?



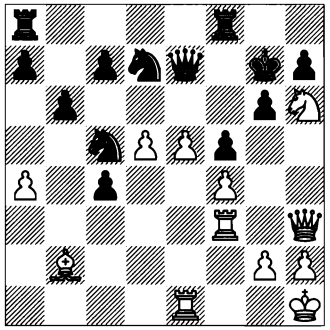
216 Black to play
P. Cramling – Short
Gibraltar 2011
Should Black seek victory with a mating attack or by winning material?



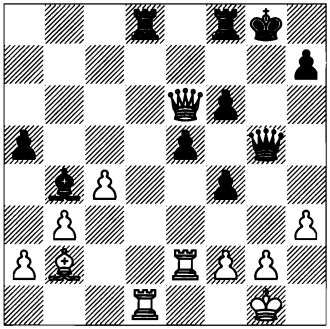
217 White to play
Rapport – Onishchuk
Gibraltar 2011
How can White make decisive material gains?



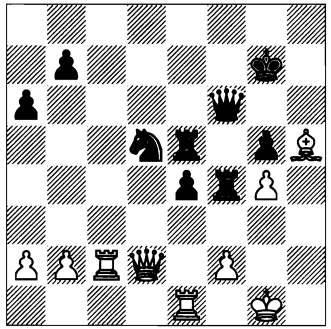
218 White to play
Gharamian – Nijboer
Maastricht 2010
Black has fallen into trouble straight out of the opening. How does White punch home his advantage?



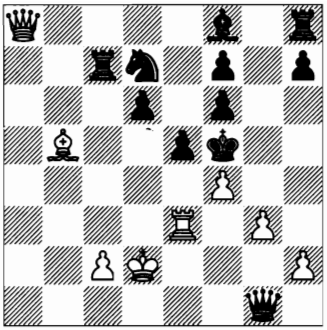
219 White to play
Finegold – Ro. Hess
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010
The next two moves are fairly obvious, but must be played in the right order.



220 Black to play
Slavin – Gormally
British League (4NCL) 2010/11
Choose between the two king moves 31...♔g7 and 31...♔h8.

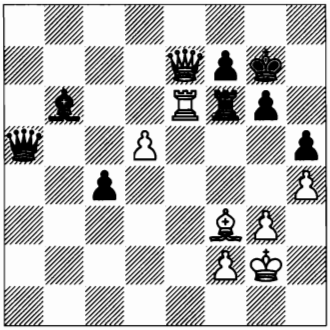


221 Black to play
Vik. Balabanov – S. Matiukhin
Russian Corr. Ch 2010-11
What is Black's clearest win?



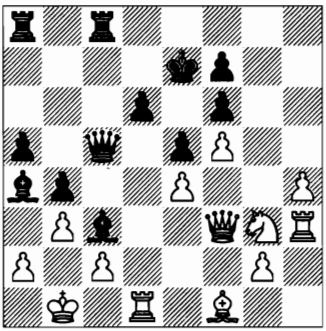
222 White to play
Hirneise – Thorfinnsson
Sarajevo 2010

The hunt is on! But with White so much material down, great accuracy is needed.



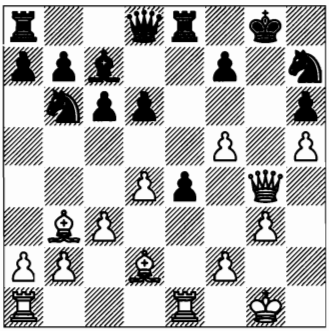
223 Black to play
S. Singh – Rathnakaran
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Black has just been presented with a golden opportunity. Seize it!



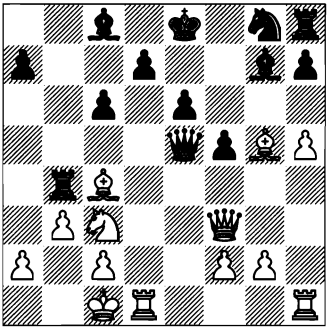
224 Black to play
Hou Yifan – Li Chao
Danzhou 2011

No doubt you see violent ways to attack the white king – but do they work? Analyse carefully.

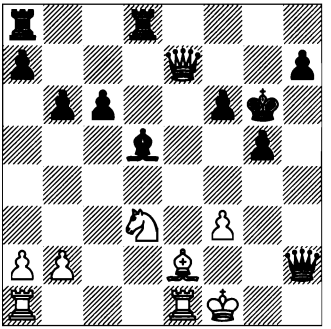


225 Black to play
Krivoruchko – Naiditsch
Greek Team Ch, Eretria 2011

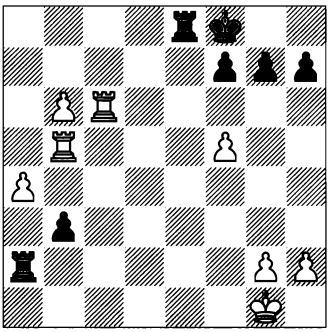
Is there a way to question the soundness of White's sacrifice, or does Black just need to look for a means of survival?



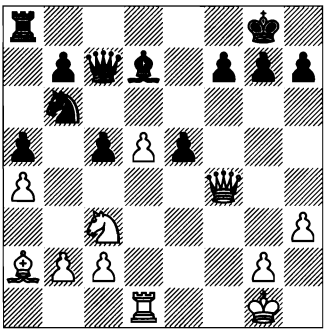
226 **White to play**



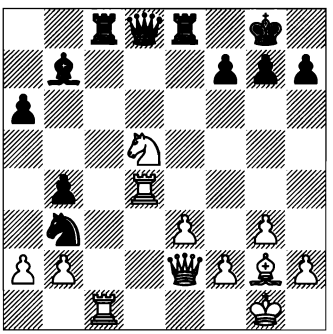
227 **White to play**



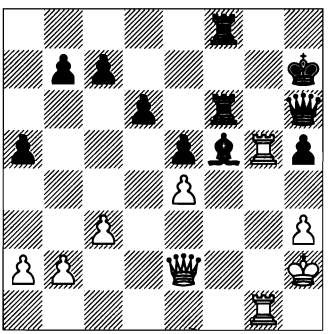
228 **White to play**



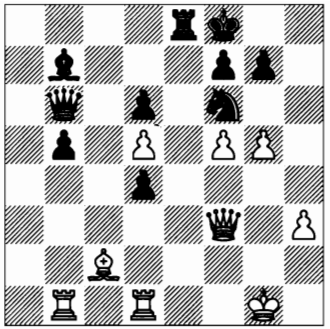
229 **White to play**



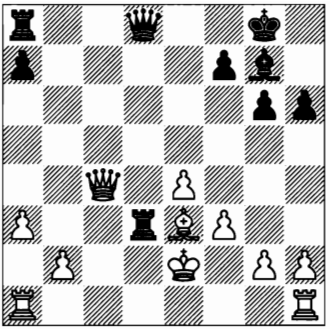
230 **White to play**



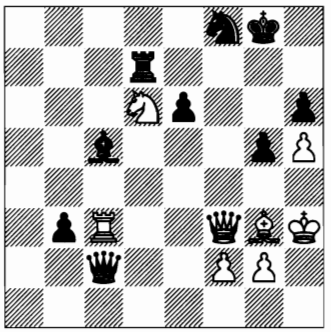
231 **White to play**



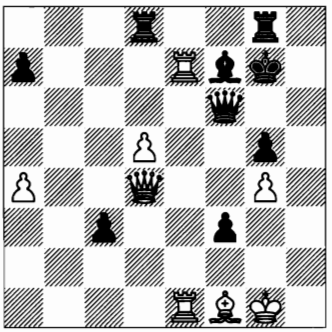
232 **White to play**



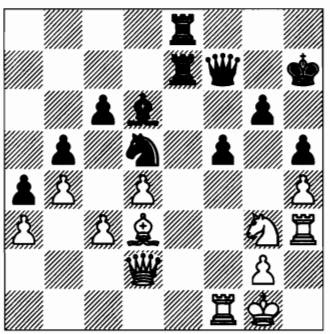
233 **Black to play**



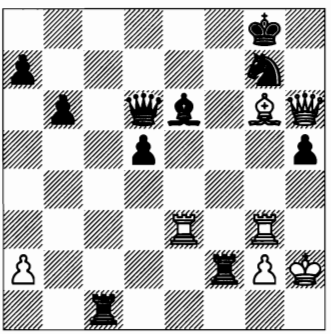
234 **Black to play**



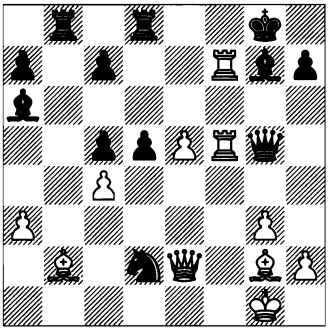
235 **White to play**



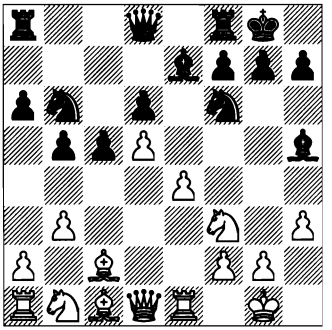
236 **White to play**



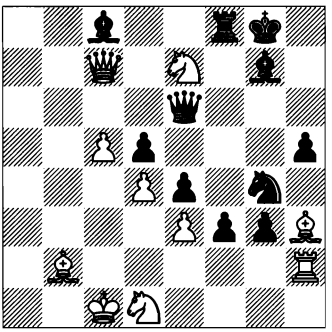
237 **White to play**



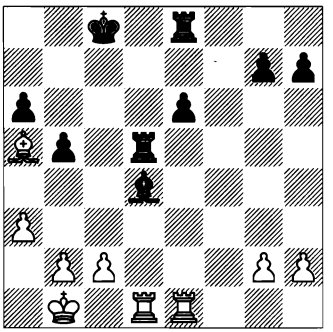
238 **Black to play**



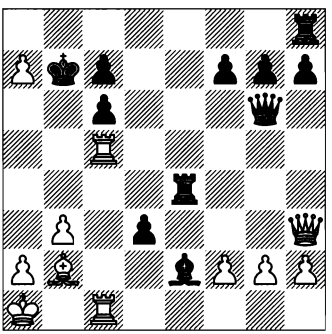
239 **Black to play**



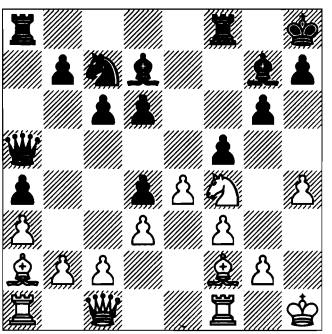
240 **Black to play**



241 **White to play**



242 **White to play**



243 **White to play**

7 Leaving the Comfort Zone Behind

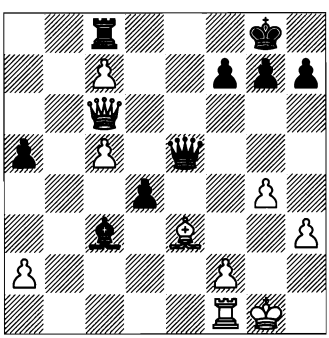
As Jonathan Rowson succinctly put it in *Chess for Zebras*, "improvement begins at the edge of your comfort zone". I think this is true for many fields of endeavour as well as for chess. It is easy to reach a plateau – a level beyond which you don't improve, because all you are doing is using existing skills. And the longer you stay on this plateau, the less likely you are to find a way off it.

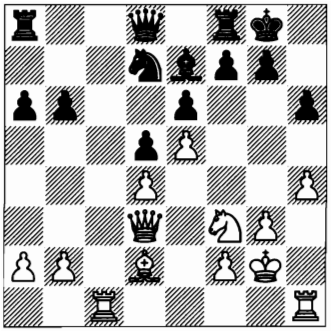
So in this chapter we shall boldly step outside the comfort zone. Some difficult decisions await you, as these puzzles call for accurate analysis and careful evaluation of positions several moves ahead. I suggest not attempting too many of them in one session, and that you sit and stare at each position for quite some time before making your decision. Even if at first you don't see anything, keep working at it, and some ideas might come to you. After all, these are the types of tough choices upon which a tournament game might hang, and you wouldn't rush such a decision, or have to make many of them all in one sitting.

Once again, you get 1 point for finding the right initial move (or correctly answering a question) and an additional 1 point if you accurately assessed the resulting position and saw the main points of the analysis.

244 **White to play**
Poliakov – Khadzh Khamed
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

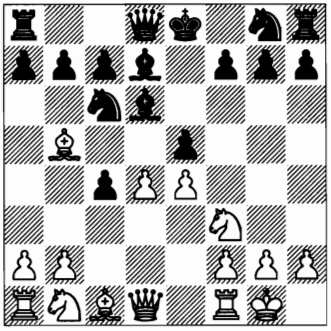
A few moves ago, White was comfortably winning, but a few careless decisions have jeopardized the victory. Can you find White's final chance to win the game?





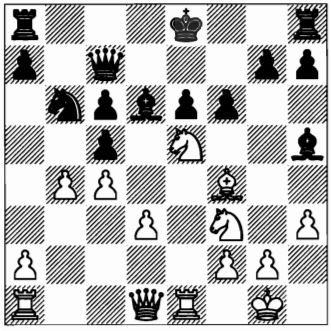
245 **White to play**
S. Ivanov – P. Cramling
Stockholm 2010/11

Having made some aggressive gestures on the kingside, White now started playing slowly on the queenside with 16 a3. Did he miss a strong way to target the black king?



246 **White to play**
Roiz – Felgaer
Cannes 2011

It's important to stay alert in the opening. Even if the position looks quiet, or similar to other positions that you know, there are points to be gained by spotting tactical finesses. How does White seize a large advantage?

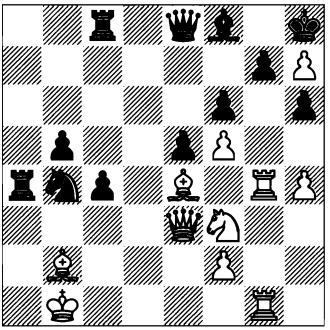


247 **White to play**
Emelin – Frolianov
Russian Ch, Taganrog 2011

White played 16 bxc5?! ♗xe5 17 ♗xe5 fxe5 18 cxb6 axb6 19 g4 ♗f7 20 ♘xe5 0-0, which left him somewhat better, but his weak pawns and exposed king gave Black drawing chances. Could White have achieved more?

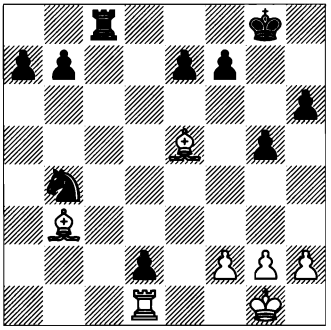
248 **White to play**
Tiviakov – C. Balogh
Wroclaw 2010

Black is about to crash through on the queenside, so White must move fast. He has an energetic way to refocus attention on the black king.



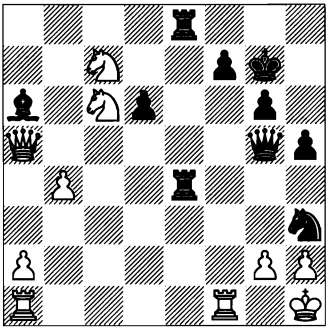
249 **Black to play**
Olszewski – A. Mista
Warsaw 2010

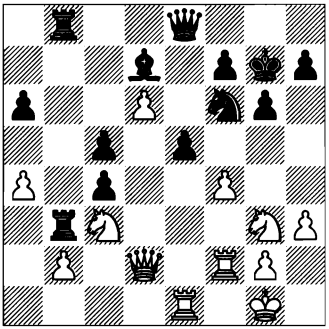
Black has four pawns for a piece, but needs to play precisely to make the most of his far-advanced d-pawn. The move-order is important here, so choose carefully.



250 **Black to play**
Prasanna – Sriram
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

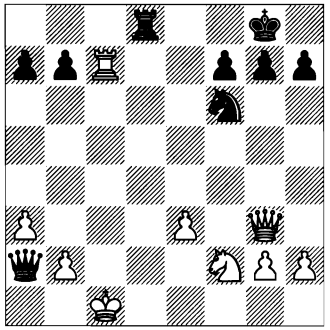
Having missed a fairly easy win a few moves ago, Black's task is now very complex. Choose between 30...♕xg2+, 30...♕e3 and 30...♘f2+.





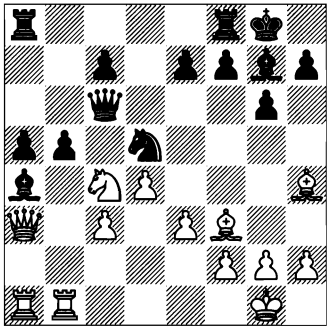
251 Black to play
Maletin – Kokarev
Bhubaneswar 2010

White has just played 24 ♖b1-e1, clearly intending to meet 24...♖xb2 with 25 fxe5. So what would you play as Black?



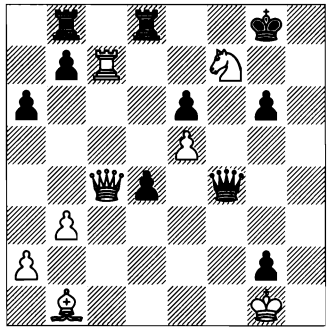
252 Black to play
Ki. Georgiev – N. Kosintseva
Gibraltar 2011

Black has launched a vicious attack, but the game will not win itself. Strike a powerful blow to seal the victory.



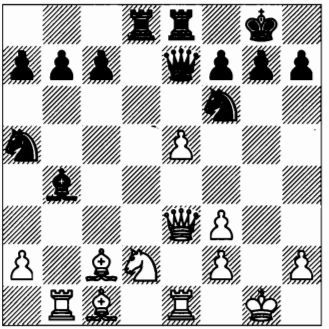
253 White to play
Avrukh – Popilski
Israeli Team Ch 2010

Black's pieces look disorganized. How should White take advantage of this?



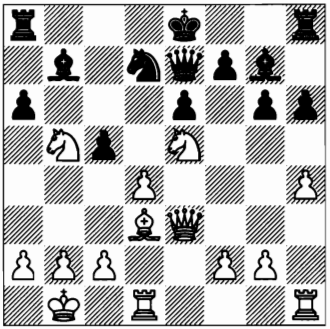
254 Black to play
Salgado – Malakhov
Villafranca 2010

Black needs to find an accurate move if he is to win cleanly.



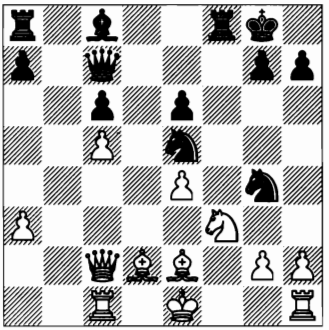
255 Black to play
Abrahamyan – Baginskaite
USA Women's Ch, Saint Louis 2011

In this highly advantageous position, Black decided to cash in with 20...♗xd2 21 ♗xd2 ♘c4. Was this a good idea?



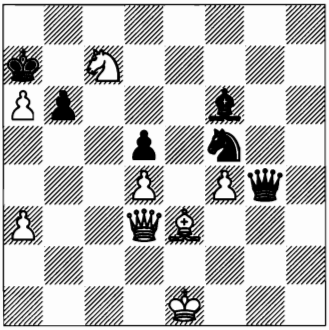
256 Black to play
Lafuente – Lupulescu
Sarajevo 2011

White has just sacrificed a piece on b5, seeking to trap the black king in the centre. What is Black's best reply?



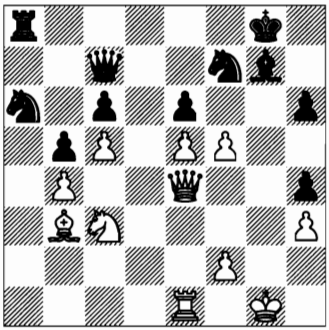
257 Black to play
Ding Liren – Zhou Weiqi
Danzhou 2011

Which move gives Black a powerful initiative?

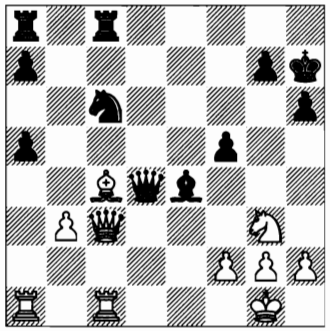


258 Black to play
Tukhaev – Borsuk
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

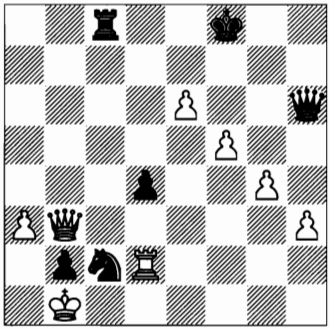
Find a neat way for Black to secure a completely level game.



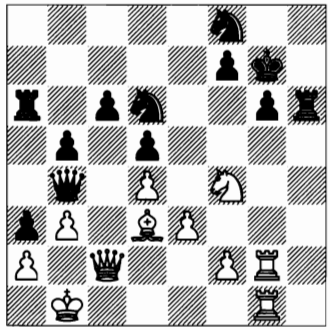
259 White to play
Khismatullin – Ponkratov
Izhevsk 2011
White appears to have many strong possibilities, but only one gives him a large advantage – and it might surprise you.



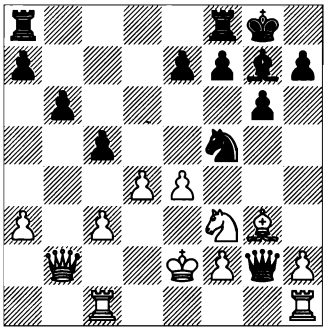
260 White to play
Zhao Jun – Nguyen Ngoc
Chinese League 2011
Black's game is fragile – how do you shatter it?



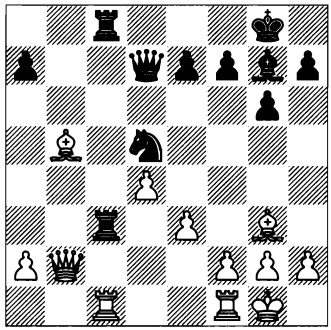
261 White to play
Naraku 1.31 – Delphil 2.6b
tcec-chess.org (computers) 2011
There are some nasty tricks that White must avoid if his pawns are to prevail.



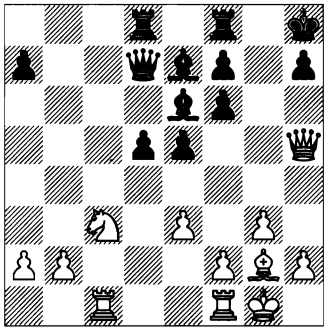
262 White to play
D. Bocharov – Suvrajit
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
Is it time to smash through the barricades, or is more preparation necessary?



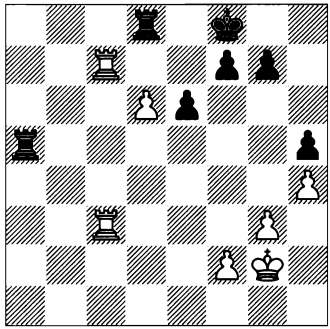
263 Black to play
Laxman – A. Gupta
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010
Consolidate or sacrifice for the attack? In the game, Black made the wrong choice.



264 Black to play
Burdalev – Poliakov
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010
Is Black simply worse? Or is White's position weaker than it looks?



265 White to play
Wang Hao – Wu Wenjin
Hefei (rapid) 2010
The lines of attack are clear enough, but it is less obvious how exactly to make use of them.

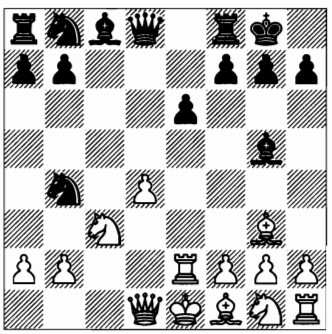


266 White to play
Vachier-Lagrave – Navara
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011
White missed a clear-cut win here. Can you do better?

8 A Tough Day at the Office

This final chapter contains the hardest puzzles in the book. They feature difficult ideas to see, and require accurate calculation, logical reasoning, creative thought and insightful assessment of positions several moves away from the diagram position. In many cases you will need to reject false paths, and simply choose the best move the position has to offer.

You get 3 points for a completely correct solution: 1 for the right initial move, 1 for seeing the main idea(s), and 1 for an accurate overall assessment. Advanced club players can be proud of solving any of these puzzles – at least decide what move you would play before looking at the solution. And if you find this chapter too easy, then all I can say is "I hope you enjoyed the book, Magnus!"

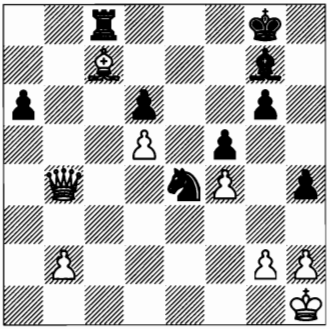


267 **Black to play**
D. Fridman – Stern
German Ch, Bonn 2011

Black has played the opening aggressively, forcing White's rook into a very odd position. He now played a few ordinary developing moves (starting with 11...b6), allowing White to organize his game. How should Black have maintained his initiative?

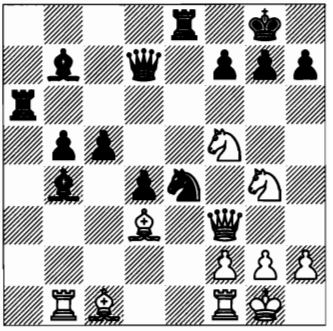
268 **Black to play**
Ponomariov – Grishchuk
Wijk aan Zee 2011

Endgames with rook and piece vs queen can be very hard to defend, as the queen can attack multiple targets, and the pieces can easily find themselves overstretched or in zugzwang. Can you see a way to avoid this unpleasant prospect? Would you play it?



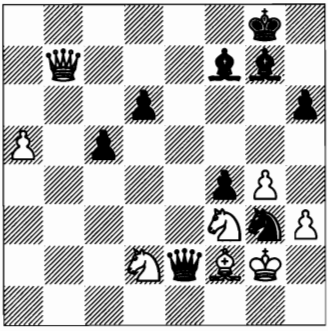
269 **White to play**
Kasimdzhanov – Negi
Asian Ch, Mashhad 2011

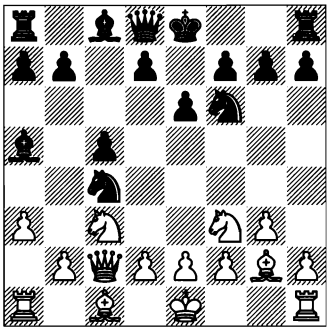
Even when we can't work out the variations to a finish or make a clear assessment, we can often be fairly sure what the best move is. This is a case in point. White has a surprising move that at least gives Black awkward problems.



270 **Black to play**
Kazhgaleev – Ivanisević
Wijk aan Zee 2011

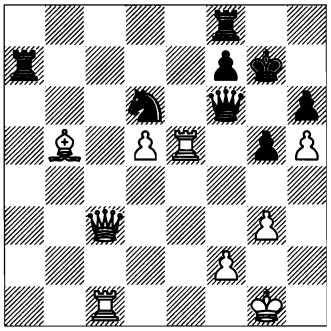
Some accurate analysis is needed here. Naturally, Black must keep an eye on White's a-pawn, but how does he stay in charge of the game as a whole? Can the coordination of White's pieces be shattered?





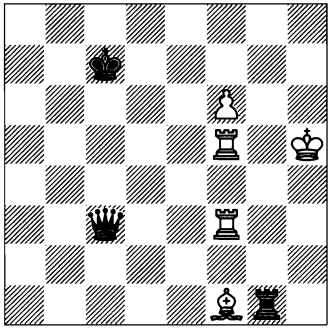
271 White to play
Houdini 1.5a – Rybka 4.1
tcec-chess.org
computer match (24) 2011

We rarely see opening creativity in computer games, as they are forced to follow their opening books. Here, Houdini's book told it to play the mundane 9 ♘a4. If allowed to think for itself, it would have chosen a far more dynamic and promising idea. What is this move?



272 White to play
Sashikiran – Roiz
World Teams, Ningbo 2011

White is a pawn up, but it will be hard to make anything of it by normal means, with Black's knight so well-placed. Do you see any more dramatic ideas? If so, do you plunge right in or make additional preparations?



273 Black to play
Daydreamer 1.75 – Deuterium 10.01
tcec-chess.org (computers) 2011

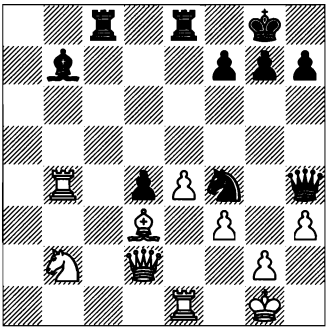
It is obvious enough that Black needs to create mating threats against the white king, but it requires very accurate play if he is to succeed.

274 **Black to play**

P.H. Nielsen – Atalik

Greek Team Ch, Eretria 2011

Black's pieces are actively placed, but how can he exploit this before White secures his kingside? Do you take a subtle approach, or try to bludgeon the white king? And what do you do with the b7-bishop?

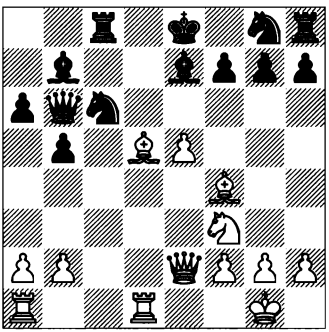


275 **White to play**

G. Grech – Vegjeleki

ICCF Corr. (Morra theme) 2007-11

Having sacrificed a piece for the initiative, now White assisted his opponent's development by 15 ♘g5? ♗xg5 16 ♗xg5 ♘ge7, and soon lost the game. Find a much better continuation. (Note that you are not looking for a forced win, just a way to keep Black under major pressure.)

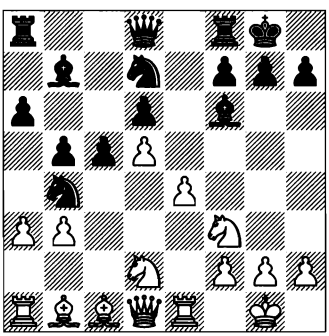


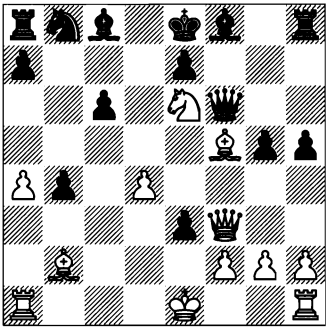
276 **White to play**

I. Chaika – Al. Voronin

Ukrainian Corr. Ch 2009-11

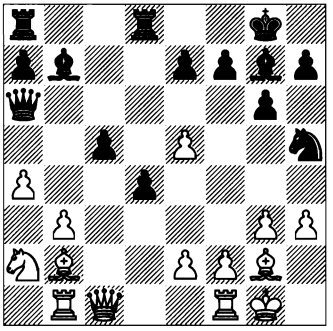
It looks like White has fallen into a nasty trap on the long diagonal. But is this so? What is White's next move, and is he worse, equal or better?





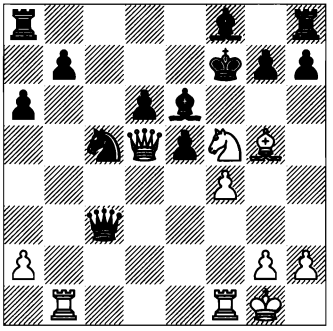
277 **White to play**
Yu Yangyi – C. Balogh
World Teams, Ningbo 2011

White has played vigorously to keep the initiative, and has an obvious development advantage. However, it looks like White's pieces are in a tangle and he can't avoid simplification. So what should he do?



278 **White to play**
Cornette – Hamdouchi
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

In this difficult position, White can choose between 19 ♕xc5 and 19 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 20 ♕xc5. However, one of these is a disastrous error. Which one and why?

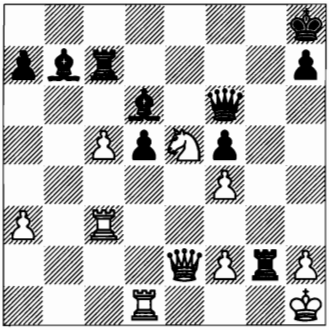


279 **White to play**
Kotronias – Xiu Deshun
Moscow 2011

White is totally committed to his attack, so must make something dramatic happen right now. Retreat is not an option, but the move-order is critical.

280 **White to play**
M. Krämer – Gyimesi
Austrian Team Ch,
St Veit/Glan 2010/11

Black has just smashed a rook into White's kingside. Don't panic! It's time to take a deep breath and calculate your next move accurately.

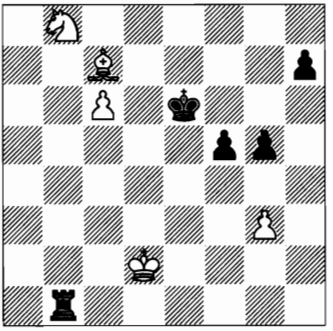


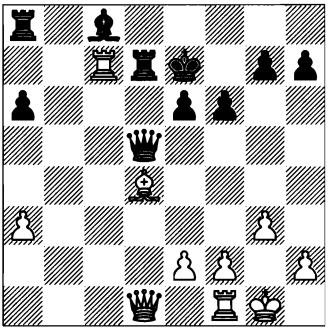
281 **Black to play**
Short – Movsesian
Reggio Emilia 2010/11

Your highly aggressive opponent has just offered you a piece. Work out what his ideas are, and decide whether to play 12...hxg5 or decline with a move like 12...♕a6.

282 **White to play**
Yagiz – Bindrich
Sarajevo 2010

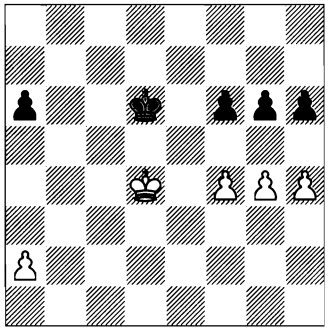
White has a study-like win here. Unless you are a world-class solver, it would not be realistic to analyse the lines to a finish at the board, but you could work out what White's next move must be if he is to keep winning chances. (But even then, it might still be the hardest puzzle in this book!)





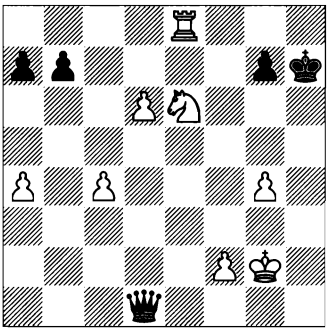
283 White to play
L. Dominguez – Short
Havana 2010

White chose 25 ♗c5+?, exchanged queens and rooks, and agreed a draw. How could he instead have gained a decisive attack?



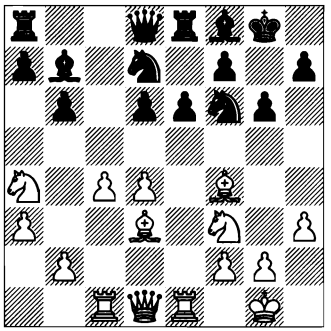
284 White to play
Hammer – Sethuraman
Moscow 2011

A tricky pawn ending! You must decide how to use the tempo moves with the a-pawns, and how they affect the battle between the kings.



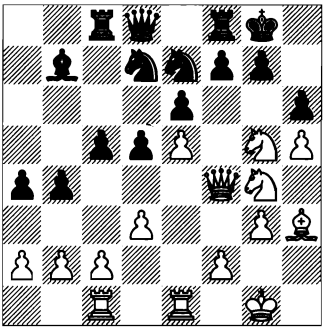
285 White to play
Magem Badals – Ipatov
Catalan Team Ch, Barcelona 2011

Can White save his powerful d-pawn without allowing perpetual check? If so, it will require perfect coordination of the white pieces.



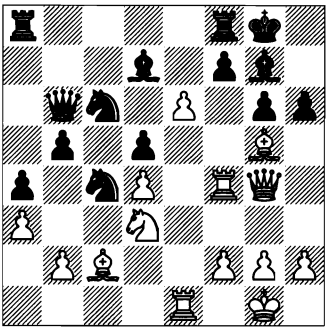
286 Black to play
Potkin – Bologan
Russian Team Ch, Olginka 2011

Black now played 14...e5. Does this: a) Lose a pawn; b) Win a piece for nothing; c) Simplify to Black's considerable advantage?



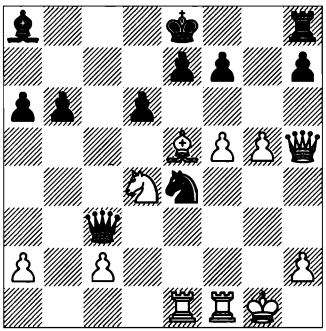
287 White to play
Bogut – N. Kosintseva
Sarajevo 2010

White's set-up is geared towards a kingside assault, so it is time for decisive measures. But what, and how?



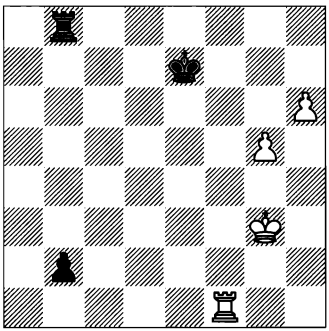
288 White to play
Kathmale – Himanshu
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

White has already sacrificed a piece, and needs to play precisely if his attack is to succeed.



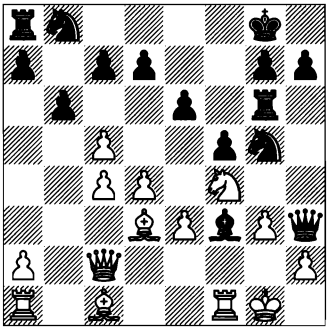
289 Black to play
Manik – Kruskić
Sarajevo 2010

Is there anything better than the obvious recapture?

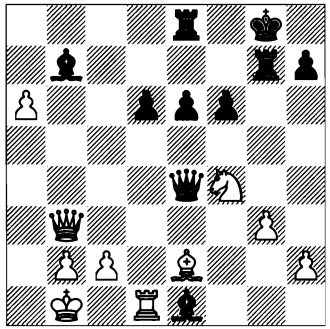


290 White to play
V. Papin – B. Savchenko
Russian Ch, Taganrog 2011

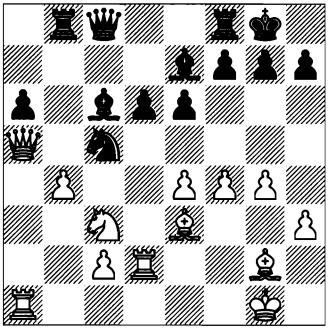
Choose: a) 51 g6 wins; b) 51 h7 wins; c) 51 ♖b1 wins; d) Black can draw no matter what White plays.



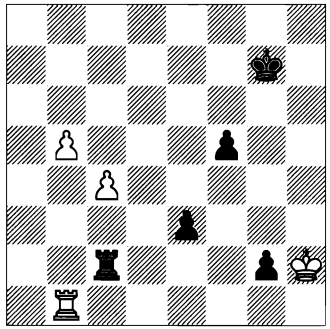
291 White to play
V. Georgiev – Elianov
French Team Ch, Guingamp 2010
Show how White can not just defend himself, but secure a large advantage.



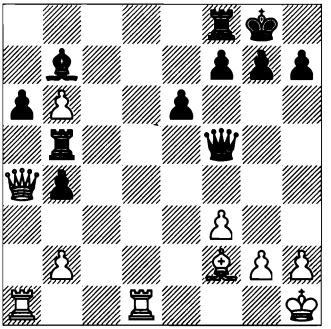
292 White to play
Iv. Sarić – Janković
Croatian Ch playoff (1), Zagreb 2010
Choose between 30 ♗h5 and 30 axb7 – some in-depth analysis is required.



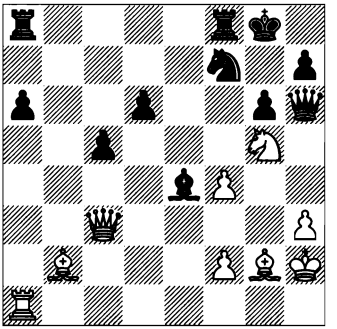
293 Black to play
Nepomniashchy – L. Dominguez
Havana 2010
A very surprising and sneaky piece of tactics enables Black to win material.



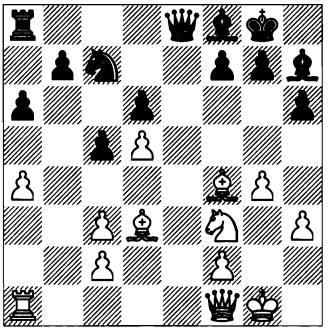
294 Black to play
Rapport – Ki. Georgiev
Sarajevo 2011
Black must coordinate his rook and pawns.



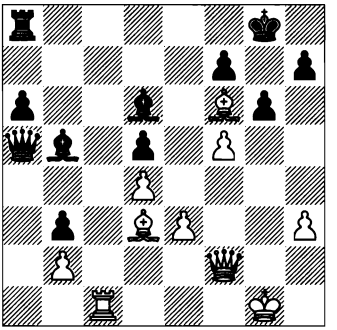
295 **Black to play**



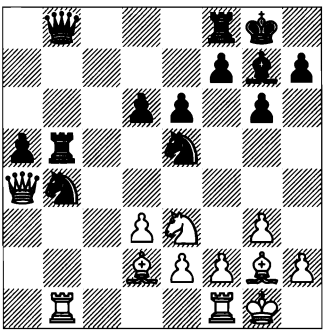
296 **Black to play**



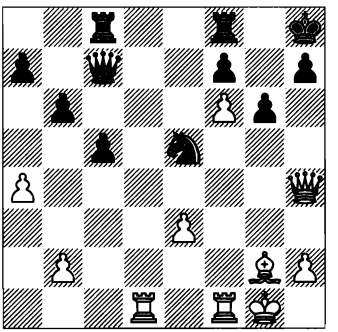
297 **Black to play**



298 **White to play**



299 **White to play**



300 **White to play**

Answers

Note that in these solutions, moves given in **bold** are those played in the actual game – whether they are the solution or not. Please also be aware that I am not expecting you to have seen every variation that I cite (or even most of them). In many cases, the analysis is there to show why certain plausible moves don't work, or to explain why the solution is correct, or how it could have been found by a logical process. *If you have chosen the right move, and seen the main ideas and any truly critical variations supporting it, then you have fully solved a puzzle.*

Chapter 1

1) 31 ♘xe6! 1-0. The main point is 31...♖xh6 32 ♘f7#. By taking on e6, the knight removed a defender of the f7-square and covered g7, so that when the rook was deflected, the other knight could give mate.

2) The queen sacrifice **21 ♕xc8+! 1-0** shatters Black's tactical defence, and is based on both decoy and deflection. If the rook takes, then there is no threat of back-rank mate (the immediate 21 ♘xe7?? allows 21...♖xd1#), while if the king takes, the black queen falls with check.

3) 16 ♗g5 ♖f6 (after 16...♕c7 17 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♖d1 White wins two pieces for a rook while retaining a tight grip on the position) **17 ♗xf6 gxf6 18 ♘d2 ♔h8 19 ♗f3** gives White a rook for a bishop and pawn, while Black has several weaknesses and poorly coordinated pieces. White won without much difficulty.

4) 32...♖xc3! 0-1. The white queen is overloaded (33 ♕xc3 ♕xe4) and the b2-pawn is pinned, so Black simply wins a piece.

5) 38...♗xg2+! (after this sacrifice, Black mates with checks) **39 ♗xg2 ♕c1+ 0-1**. The finale is 40 ♔h2 ♘f3+! 41 ♗xf3 ♕g1#.

6) 23 ♘xf7! picks off the f7-pawn and so ruins Black's kingside defences. 23...♔xf7? is impossible due to 24 ♘d6+, discovering an attack on the black queen.

7) 30...♖g1+! (decoying the white king so that the knight can give check, discovering an attack on the white queen) **31 ♔e2** (trying to sidestep, but to no avail; 31 ♔xg1 ♘xf3+) **31...♖e1+! 0-1**. Now there is no way out, as 32 ♔d2 (32 ♔xe1 ♘xf3+) 32...♘xf3+ shows.

8) 36...♘h2!

The knight is invulnerable due to mating ideas, so this move simply forks the white rooks. After a line such as 36...b6?! 37 ♘g3 ♖xa2 38 ♘xh5 a5 (38...♘h2?? 39 ♖xf6+) 39 ♘g3 it isn't clear that Black is winning – at any rate there is a lot of work for him to do.

37 ♘g7+ (37 ♔xh2 allows the main idea: 37...♖gxg2+ 38 ♔h3 {38 ♔h1 ♖h2+ 39 ♔g1 ♖dg2#} 38...♖h2+ 39 ♔g3 ♖dg2#) **37...♖xg7 38 ♖xf6+ ♔e7 39 ♔xh2 ♖gxg2+ 0-1**. After 40 ♔h3

♖h2+ 41 ♔g3 ♖dg2+ 42 ♔f3 ♔xf6 White has lost a rook.

9) 29 ♗c4! is not the easiest move to see, but it is based on a very simple pin. Black cannot defend the b5-pawn, and 29...♖xc4? fails to 30 ♕xc4.

10) 35...♕a4!

White's knight is pinned against the unprotected rook on c2, and attacked three times and defended only once. 35...♘xb3? 36 ♕xa7 ♖xa7 37 ♖xb3 leaves Black a pawn down, and 35...♖xb3?? 36 ♖xb3 is even worse.

36 ♘xc5

36 ♖xc5 dxc5 certainly doesn't improve White's lot. 36 ♖a5 ♕xb3 is likewise hopeless. 36 ♖b2 ♖xb3 37 ♖2xb3 ♘xb3 38 ♕d1 is an unsuccessful pin because of 38...♘c5.

36...♕xc2

White is an exchange down and will even lose his c4-pawn. After **37 ♘d7 ♕xc4 38 ♕xc4 ♖xc4** Black won easily enough.

11) After **21...♘g5!** the white queen is trapped, and there is no good way to save it. There is very little to analyse here; the only problem is considering the move at all, given its odd appearance. 22 ♗xh7+ is no kind of solution because after 22...♔xh7 White can't even maintain his d2-bishop: 23 ♕c3? ♘e4. After **22 ♖d1 ♖xe3 23 ♗xe3 ♘e6 24 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8** Black won without much difficulty.

12) No, he wins the game by a simple back-rank tactic: **17...♖xa3! 0-1**. 18 ♖xa3 ♕xb1+ or 18 ♖xb6 ♖xa1+.

13) 30 f6! wins on the spot: 30...♕xf6 (30...♕d6 31 ♕g6+; 30...♕d7 31 ♕g6+ ♔f8 32 fxg7+ ♖xg7 33 ♕xh6; 30...gxf6 31 ♕xg8#) 31 ♕xc7+ ♔f8 (31...♔e6 32 ♖e1+ ♔f5 33 ♖f1+) 32 ♕c8+ ♔f7 33 ♕xb7+ (not just greed; 33 ♕d7+ ♔f8 34 ♖e1? ♕c6+ leaves White with some work to do) 33...♔f8 34 ♕c8+ ♔f7 35 ♕d7+ ♔f8 36 ♖e1 and White wins.

In the game, Ftačnik missed his chance, choosing **30 ♖e1?**, a natural move that keeps some advantage, although the game ended in a draw.

14) Siebrecht – Schut
Amsterdam (3) 2010

24 ♘exf6+! (this combinative pattern, linking a knight fork with a vulnerability on the long diagonal, should be in every player's arsenal) **24...gxf6 25 ♗xd5+ ♔h8** (25...♕xd5 26 ♘xf6+ is the main point of the combination) **26 e4** left White a pawn up with an excellent position. He went on to win without difficulty.

15) Dzhumaev – Neetakshya
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

25 ♘g6+! 1-0. 25...hxg6 26 ♖h3+ and mate next move. This is a standard mating pattern.

16) Geetha – Grandelius
Sarajevo 2010

34 ♖c1! is White's only good move, but proves sufficient to win. Black's back rank provided a generous clue here! **34...♗xg2+** (nothing else fares any better: 34...h5 35 ♕xg6 fxg6 36 f7+ ♔f8 37 ♖c8+ ♔e7 38 f8♕+, 34...♕xg4 35 ♖c8+ ♖e8 36 ♖xe8# or 34...gxf6 35 ♖c8+ ♔g7 36 ♘f5#!) **35 ♕xg2 1-0**

17) M. Hasan – Van Rensburg
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

17 ♗xe6! wins a piece:

a) 17...fxe6 18 ♗xg5 ♗xf3 19 ♕d2! (not 19 ♗xd8? ♗xd1; 19 ♖xf3? ♕xg5).

b) 17...♗xe3 18 ♗xg4.

c) 17...♗xf3 18 ♕xf3 fxe6 (after 18...♗xe3 White can continue 19 ♗xc8 or 19 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 20 ♕xe3) 19 ♕xf8+ ♕xf8 20 ♖xf8+ and 21 ♗xg5.

In the game, **17 ♕d2? ♗xe3 18 ♕xe3** was roughly level.

18) Van Wessel – Nijboer

KNSB Cup, Amersfoort 2010

After 37 ♕xg7+! ♘xg7 38 ♘f6+ White wins a piece. In the game, White squandered his chance by playing **37 ♗d2?**.

19) Ankit – Debashish

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

35 ♖e8+! (White's combination features deflection/overload and a back-rank mate) **35...♗xe8** (35...♖xe8 leaves the queen unprotected and so allows 36 ♕xd6) **36 ♕xd6** (36 ♖xe8+ also wins) **1-0**. Black is mated after 36...♖xd6 37 ♖xe8#.

20) Movsesian – Tkachev

Halle 2010

The knight-fork trick **22 ♕xg7+! ♔xg7 23 ♘f5+** netted White a very good extra pawn.

21) Ankit – Ganesh

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

16 ♕xc6! bxc6 (or 16...♕xd1+ 17 ♖xd1 bxc6 18 ♘xe4) **17 ♖xd8 ♖axd8** (17...♘xc3 is no good because 18 ♖xf8+ is check) **18 ♘xe4** with a decisive material advantage.

22) Klementev – Avetisian

Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

20...♕xe3+ 21 ♘xe3 ♘e2+ 22 ♔h2 ♖xh5# (0-1). This is a textbook example of Anastasia's Mate, which is Deadly Checkmate No. 1 in *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess*!

23) Joshi – Navalgund

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Two crisp blows overload White's defences. The first exploits the overworked white rook: **31...♖e1+! 32 ♔g2** (32 ♔h2 ♕xh4+; 32 ♖xe1 ♕xd4) **32...♗e4+! 0-1**. The king has no safe square: 33 ♔g3 ♕f3+ 34 ♔h2 ♕g2#.

24) Lerner – M. Rodshtein

Israeli Team Ch 2010

36 ♘b4! (this double attack works as Black's rook would fall with check, whereas White's doesn't) **36...♖xc1** (36...♘xb4 37 ♖xc8+ ♔g7 38 ♕c3+ and 36...♖d8 37 ♘xa2 ♘f4+ 38 exf4 both leave White way ahead on material) **37 ♘xa2 ♖a1 38 ♘b4 1-0**

25) Ashwin – A. Gupta

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

28...♖c1! 29 ♖xf7 (White cannot save his bishop without allowing mate on the back rank; 29 f3 ♖8c2 doesn't help) **29...♖xf1+ 30 ♔h2** (30 ♔xf1 ♖c1# is the main point) **30...♖xf2+ 31 ♔g3 ♖g2+ 0-1**. 32 ♔f3 ♖c3#.

26) Yakimov – D. Kovaliov

Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

34 ♖xg5+!

Surprisingly, this sacrifice, forcing mate, is the only way to win. After 34 ♕g6+? ♔f8 35 ♕xf6+ ♔e8, the best White can do is 36 ♖xg5 ♖xg5+ 37 ♔f3 ♕c7 38 ♕h8+ ♔e7 39 ♕xa8, when the game is likely to end in perpetual check by one side or the other.

34...fxg5 (34...hxg5 35 ♕g6+ is the same; 34...♔h8 35 ♕xf6+ ♔h7 36 ♕f7+ ♔h8 37 ♘g6+ ♖xg6 38 ♖xg6 and mate follows soon) **35 ♕g6+ 1-0**. It's mate next move.

27) B. Cheng – Xu Haizhou

Canadian Junior Ch, Toronto 2010

After the temporary queen sacrifice **30...♕xa3+! 31 bxa3 ♘c3+** Black emerges a piece to the good: **32 ♔b3 ♘xe2 33 ♖e1 ♖b8+ 0-1**.

28) Nakamura – Shulman
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010

26...♕e3! 0-1 is a classic exploitation of a weak back rank. The fact that a white rook, and not a pawn, is on h2 might make it hard to spot the familiar pattern, but the effect is just the same. White is mated or loses most of his pieces: 27 ♖g1 ♖c1, 27 ♖xe3 ♖c1+ 28 ♖e1 ♖xe1# or 27 ♕h4 ♖c1.

29) Suvrajit – E. Hossain
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

30...♘d1! is just a standard knight fork – only the setting might have made it a little hard to spot, since it is rare for a knight to intrude on the opponent's back rank in a middlegame situation. With his queen attacked and ...♕xf2+ threatened, White must give up the exchange. After **31 ♖xd1 ♖xd1** Black won comfortably with his extra material.

30) Wang Li – Yu Shaoteng
Hefei (rapid) 2010

22 ♖xc4! (a simple exploitation of a pin and the fact that the a8-rook will be trapped) **22...dxc4** (otherwise Black has simply lost a pawn; 22...♗f6 23 ♘c7 ♘xc7 24 ♖xc7 ♗xe5 25 ♖xb7 is miserable for Black) **23 ♗xb7 f6** (23...♖ab8 drops the a6-knight) **24 ♘g6 f5 25 ♘e5 ♗f6 26 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 27 ♕c2** and White went on to win.

31) Kariakin – Shirov
Odessa (rapid) 2010

37 ♖h8+! 1-0. The white queen now enters the attack with check, and Black is mated whatever he plays: 37...♔g7 38 ♕xe5+ f6 39 ♕e7# or 37...♗xh8 38 ♕e8+ ♔g7 39 ♕xh8#.

32) Bu Xiangzhi – Ni Hua
Hefei (rapid) 2010

25...♘f3+! (a devastating blow, based on overload) **26 ♖xf3** (26 gxf3?? allows 26...♕g3+ 27 ♔h1 ♖xh3#, while 26 ♔f2 ♕xc1 27 ♔xf3 ♕g5 leaves Black the exchange up with White's king in danger) **26...♕xc1+ 27 ♖f1 ♕c7** and Black went on to win.

33) Li Shilong – Wang Hao
Chinese Ch, Xinghua 2010

32 ♘xe6! (essentially, this is a simple knight fork, since it's instant mate if Black captures the piece) **32...♗xg2** (32...fxe6 33 ♕e8#) **33 ♘xg7** (33 ♘xc7 ♗f3+ 34 ♕g5 is also an easy win) **33...♗xf1 34 ♘e8 1-0**. White will be a rook to the good.

34) V. Mikhalevski – de Firmian
Calgary 2010

36 ♕e7! (36 ♖xd6? ♕xd6 gives White nothing) **1-0**. White threatens 37 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 38 ♕xf8#, and Black can only prevent this with a catastrophic loss of material: 36...♕d7 37 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 38 ♕xf8#, 36...♕e8 37 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8 38 ♖xd6 or 36...♔g8 37 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 38 ♖f8+ (deflection) 38...♖xf8 39 ♕xd6.

35) A. Kovačević – Perunović
Bosnian Team Ch, Bihac 2010

41...♘h4! creates the double threat of 42...♖f1# and 42...♖xb4, the latter being deadly now that ♖xf5 isn't available as a reply. White cannot avoid losing a piece and the game concluded **42 ♖e8+ ♔f7 43 ♖e7+!?** (a last desperate throw, as now 43...♔xe7? 44 ♘d5+ would leave White with some hope) **43...♔f8 0-1**

36) Van Wely – Reinderman
Dutch Ch, Eindhoven 2010

49 ♗g8+! 1-0. Deflecting the king away from protecting the black queen.

37) Navara – Bruzon
Havana 2011

32 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 33 ♘f6+ 1-0. After 33...♔f8 (33...♔h8 34 ♕c8+ is simpler) 34 ♕c8+ ♖e8, White has the pretty finish 35 ♕xc5+ ♖e7 36 ♕c8+ ♖e8 37 ♗b4+ ♕xb4 38 ♕xe8#, though 35 ♘xe8 ♕xe8 36 ♕xc5+, winning a piece, is quite good enough.

Chapter 2

38) 35 ♕xf5! makes use of a pin and two different forks on e6 (by either queen or bishop) to force a won ending: 35...♕xf5 (35...♖xc4 36 ♕xe6+ picks off the c4-rook) 36 ♗xe6+ ♕xe6 37 ♖xe6 is winning for White as he is two pawns up and his pieces are very well-placed.

35 ♖xe6? fails to 35...fxg5 (but not 35...♖xc4? 36 ♖xf6) as the discovered check achieves nothing. In the game, **35 ♗xe6+? ♗xe6 36 ♕xg7+ ♕xg7 37 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 38 ♖xe6 ♖c4 39 ♖xa6 ♖xd4 40 g3** gave White a solid defensive fortress, but no winning chances.

39) Definitely not, since White sacrifices his queen and mates the black king! **24...♕f5?? 25 ♖xd6! ♕xc2 26 ♖d8+ ♔h7 27 ♘g5+ 1-0**. The game would have ended in an attractive geometrical mate: 27...♔h6 28 ♘xf7+ ♔h5 (or 28...♔h7 29 ♖h8#) 29 ♖h8+ ♘h7 30 ♖xh7#. It is well worth making a mental note of this mating pattern, because it is clearly easy to miss (Inarkiev was rated 2672 at the time of this game!), especially if you have openings with this doubled g-pawn structure in your repertoire.

40) I hope you didn't, since **51 ♘d3??** is a losing blunder! 51...♕b7+! wins because 52 ♔e3 ♗b6 pins and wins the white queen. 52 ♔f4 ♕e4# catches the white king in a neat mid-board mate, while 52 e4 ♕xe4+ is clearly hopeless for White. However, Black replied **51...♗f6??** and the game ended a few moves later in a draw.

It's easy to overlook points like this if, as White, you are thinking only of how to avoid a draw, and, as Black, if you are focused on avoiding losing. Both players are rated over 2600, and both missed this two-move deep idea!

41) Black's saving resource is the striking 40...♖e8!. It's not every day that a rook has the chance to skewer two queens, so this move is easy to overlook. The basic point is simple enough: 41 ♕xe8 ♕b4+ 42 ♔b2 ♕d2+ 43 ♔b1 ♕d1+ 44 ♔b2 ♕d2+ leads to perpetual check, and other moves are no improvement:

a) 41 ♗d3 ♕b4+ (41...♕xc8 42 ♕d4+ ♔g8 43 ♕xa7 ♕c1+ is also a draw) 42 ♔b2 ♕d2+ 43 ♔a3, etc.

b) 41 ♗b5 ♕b4+ 42 ♔b2 ♖xd8 43 ♕xd8 ♖b7 44 ♗a4 ♖e7 is at least OK for Black.

c) 41 ♖c2 ♕a1+ 42 ♖a2 ♕c3 repeats.

d) 41 f5 ♖xd8 42 ♕xd8 h5 leaves White in no position to play for a win.

42) 42 ♕g8+!

Checks on other squares let the black king escape into open space via d5: 42 ♕c8+? ♔d5 43 ♕d8+ and now 43...♔c4! is the only move to retain equality (not 43...♔xc5?? 44 ♕d4+ ♔b5 45 c4+). Also after 42 ♕h6+? ♔d5 43

♕g5+ (43 ♕d2+ ♔c4!) 43...♔c4 44 ♕f4+ ♔b5! the game should be drawn.

42...♔e5

Still trying to escape into the middle of the board, but there is nowhere to run from here. Other king moves last longer, but the outcome is clear because the king is cornered: 42...♔f6 43 ♕f8+ ♔g6 44 ♕f5+ ♔g7 45 ♗d4+ ♔g8 46 ♕g6+ ♔f8 47 ♗c5#; 42...♔d7 43 ♕f7+ ♔d8 44 ♕e7+! ♔c8 45 ♕e6+ ♔d8 (45...♗d7 46 ♕g8+) 46 ♗e7+ ♔e8 47 ♗g5+ ♔f8 48 ♗h6#.

43 ♕g5+ ♔e4

Or 43...♔e6 44 ♕f5#.

44 ♕f5# (1-0)

43) 31 ♗e6! 1-0. The tactics are not complicated, but this is still an easy move to miss. Black resigned in view of 31...♘d6 32 ♖xd6, 31...♖xd4 32 ♖xc8# or 31...♖xc2 32 ♖xd8+ ♔c7 33 ♖c8+ ♔d6 34 ♖xc2.

44) 28 ♘xf7! ♔xf7 29 ♖xe7+ (removing the defender of the c8-rook, and so setting up a double attack by the queen) **29...♗xe7 30 ♕f5+ ♗f6 31 ♕xc8** and with a material advantage and a strong position, White won easily.

45) 33...♕b1+! 34 ♔h2 (34 ♗f1 ♗c4 is obviously a catastrophe for White) 34...♘g4+! (you needed to have seen this follow-up) 35 hxg4 hxg4 and mate by ...♖h8+ can only be prevented at an enormous cost in material.

In the game there followed instead **33...♗d7?! 34 ♕b3 ♖e1+ 35 ♔h2** and White somehow squirmed his way out and drew in the end.

46) The answer is: Black wins! After 40...♘xf1! White can't play the intended 41 cxb7 because he is mated in beautiful fashion by Black's minor pieces: 41...♘g3+ 42 ♔h2 ♘e4+ 43 ♔h1 ♘f2#. But 41 ♗xf1 b5 simply gives Black two healthy extra pawns.

However, the game continued instead **40...bxc6? 41 ♖d1 ♔g7 42 a4 ♔f6 43 ♖c1 ♘c4**, when 44 ♖c3! would have kept the outcome very much in doubt.

47) Yakovenko – Ponomariov
Astrakhan 2010

22 ♗xb5! (22 ♖b1?! retains a significant advantage for White, but is less forcing) **22...♕xb5 23 ♖b1 ♕c6 24 ♕b3+** wins a pawn. After **24...c4 25 ♕xb7 ♕xb7 26 ♖xb7 f5** (threats like ♘d4 mean that Black cannot just await developments) **27 ♘xg5 f4 28 ♘e6 ♗e5 29 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 30 ♖c7 fxg3 31 hxg3 ♗xc3 32 ♖xc4** White had a significant material advantage and won without much difficulty.

48) Sebenik – Šolak
Sarajevo 2010

Black should play directly for mate: 36...♕h3! 37 ♗f3 (37 f3? is also met by 37...♘g4) 37...♘g4 and White can only limp on with a lost position by 38 ♕c8+ ♔h7 39 ♗xe4+ dxe4 40 ♕c2 ♕h2+ 41 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 42 ♔e2 ♘xf2.

In the game Black went astray: after **36...♘xh5? 37 ♗e5!** White had counterplay, while Black's pieces were no longer working in unison.

49) Kannemeyer – Deshmukh
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

22...♗xa6 (this sets up a double attack; White is still in the game after 22...♖xf3?! 23 ♗xb7) **23 ♕xa6 ♖xf3! 0-1.** White is a piece down following 24 gxf3 ♕g5+ and ...♕xc1.

50) Hou Yifan – Li Shilong
Chinese Ch, Xinghua 2010

Black wins material with a simple skewer: **26...♖b5!**. Presumably the fact that it is rare to have a skewer along a rank was the only reason that Hou missed it. After **27 ♗xf8 ♕xd5 28 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 29 ♗b4 ♖d2** the technical task facing Black was not so difficult, and he went on to win.

51) Burović – Prohaszka
Sarajevo 2010

47...♖xh3+!!

This brilliant tactical blow is based on two beautiful follow-up tactics. After 47...♕c1? 48 ♗xd4 ♘g3! Black can only scrape a draw: 49 ♗d3 ♖xd3! 50 ♖xd3 ♘f1+ 51 ♔g1 ♘g3+ 52 ♔h2 ♘f1+, etc., or 49 ♖e2 ♘xe2! 50 ♗xe2 ♖c2 51 ♕h4 ♖xe2 52 ♕d8+ ♔g7 53 ♕f6+ with perpetual check.

48 ♔g1 (or: 48 ♔xh3 ♕h5+ and mate next move; 48 gxh3 ♘f3+ and ...♘xd2) **48...♘g3!** (this follow-up is vital; otherwise Black would be left with too many pieces *en prise*) **49 ♕xg3** (49 ♖xd1 ♖h1# is a key point, while after 49 gxh3 ♘f3+ 50 ♔g2 ♘xd2 Black emerges a strong pawn ahead with his knights crawling all over White's position) **49...♘e2+!** (the final point, deflecting the white rook so that the black queen is safe) **50 ♖xe2 ♖xg3 51 ♖a2 ♖c3 52 ♖a8+ ♔h7 53 ♖a2 ♕b1 54 ♗d4 ♕xa2 55 ♗xc3 ♕a7+ 56 ♔h1 ♕f2 0-1**

52) M. Pavlović – Trkulja
Sarajevo 2010

40...g3! wins: 41 ♗e3 (41 ♖f1 gxf2+ 42 ♕xf2+ ♔e6 43 ♕f7+ ♔d6 and Black is simply a piece up; after 41 ♗xg3 ♕xg3 White fails to regain his piece as 42 ♖f1+ is met by 42...♔e6) 41...♕xe3+! (this back-rank tactic is the key point) 42 ♖xe3 ♖d1+ 43 ♖e1 ♖xe1#.

In the game, Black missed this golden opportunity, and after **40...♕d2? 41 ♕c4** it was White who had all the chances, as 41...g3 is now well met by 42 ♖f1!?.

53) Ashwin – Das
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

21...♗xf2+! exploits the fact that White has carelessly left the f2-square unprotected:

a) After 22 ♔xf2 ♕c5+ White suffers major material losses because 23 ♔e2 allows mate by 23...♕e3+ 24 ♔f1 ♘g3#.

b) 22 ♔f1 is most strongly met by 22...♘e5!, guarding the e6-pawn and creating too many threats for White to deal with.

c) 22 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 23 ♔h2 ♕d6 and the threat of mate by 24...♘f1++ 25 ♔h1 ♕h2+ 26 ♘xh2 ♘g3# forces White to give up a piece by 24 ♘e4 ♘xe4+ 25 ♕xd6 ♘xd6.

In the game, Black played **21...e5?** and lost.

54) S. Porat – Kantsler
Israeli Team Ch 2010

23 ♘f6+! (not a complicated combination, but a sacrifice on an empty square is easy to overlook) **23...♕xf6** (the queen must make the capture, as it is *en prise*, but now Black suffers a disaster due to the queen's presence on the f-file) **24 ♗xf5 ♕e5** (after 24...♕d8 25 ♕e6+ White wins the knight, since 25...♖f7 is answered by 26 ♗xh7+; or 24...♘e5 25 ♗e6+ and the queen drops) **25 ♗e6+ ♔h8 26 ♖e4 ♖a1 27 ♖e1 1-0**. The d7-knight is lost.

55) M. Porat – O. Vasiliev
Israeli Team Ch 2010

15 ♘b5! cxb5 16 ♗d1 leaves the black queen trapped. Instead White

played **15 ♗a5?**, and ended up losing a long game.

56) M. Botvinnik – Murei
Israeli Team Ch 2010

After 38...♖c8! White cannot avoid the loss of a piece: 39 ♗xd6 ♖c2+! 40 ♔e3 ♗xb5. Probably in time-trouble, Murei missed this, choosing **38...♖xa3?**, and the game was later drawn.

57) Ale. Probst – H. Dobosz
Stuttgart 2010

12 c5! exploits Black's carelessness with his minor pieces. After 12...♗xc5 (12...♘d5 13 a3 ♗a5 14 b4) 13 ♕b5+ White wins a piece. In the game, **12 ♘bc3?** led to a merely 'normal' position.

58) Drozdovsky – Kariakin
Odessa (rapid) 2010

27 f3! ♘d6 28 ♘f5+! (now that the black queen is not protected by the knight, White executes his main idea) **28...♘xf5** (28...gxf5 is the only other option, and it loses to the same idea: 29 ♖g8+) **29 ♖g8+** (deflecting the king away, so the black queen is lost) **29...♔xg8 30 ♕xf6 ♖xe3 31 g4 ♘e7 32 ♕b6 ♖e6 33 ♕xb7** and White's material advantage was sufficient to win.

59) Feller – Bhat
Metz 2010

22 ♗h6+! (White uses decoy and deflection to save his e8-rook, and thus win material; 22 ♖xd3? ♖xe8 and 22 ♖xh8?? ♖xd1+ are obviously no good for White) **22...♖xh6** (22...♔xh6 23 ♖xh8+ ♔g7 24 ♖xd3 ♔xh8 is also hopeless for Black, while 22...♔h7 doesn't help, since 23 ♖xh8+ is now check) **23 ♖xd3 ♘c7 24 ♖c8 ♗b6 25 ♖d7 ♘d5 26 ♗xd5 cxd5 27 ♖xd5 1-0**

60) Polak – Haba
Hustopeče (rapid) 2010

21 ♗xg7! wins material: 21...♔xg7 (21...♕xg7 22 ♖g4) 22 ♖h4 ♕g6 23 ♖g4 and White will have a queen and a pawn for a rook and a bishop. In the game, **21 ♖de1? ♖xe4 22 ♕xe4 ♗c8 23 ♗c1 ♕f6** left Black's position secure, and he went on to win in the end.

61) Portisch – Olsarova
Marianske Lazne 2010

36...♗h2+! (36...♖f1+? is the only other move to avoid loss, but it only draws: 37 ♔xf1 ♕xg2+ 38 ♔e1 ♕g1+ 39 ♔d2! ♕g2+, etc.) **0-1**. It's mate after 37 ♔h1 ♖f1+ 38 ♔xh2 ♕xg2# or 37 ♔xh2 ♖xh3+! 38 ♔xh3 ♕xg2+ 39 ♔h4 ♕g4#.

62) Conquest – A. Hunt
British League (4NCL) 2010/11

40...♗xd6! picks off a key pawn, and puts White in serious trouble. The main points are White's weak back rank and the overloading of his knight. 41 ♗xd4 (41 ♘xd6 ♕xe5 42 ♘e4 f5; 41 ♗xd6?? ♕e1+) 41...cxd4 (the fancier 41...♕d5 promises less) 42 ♕xd4 ♗c7 and White is unable to save his a6-pawn.

The game was drawn after **40...♗g7? 41 ♗g3 h5 42 ♗f2 ♗f6 43 h3 ½-½**.

63) Houdini 1.5a – Rybka 4.1
tcec-chess.org computer match (6) 2011

28 ♘f7! hits both the black queen and the e8-rook. The basic points are 28...♘xd6? 29 ♘xh6 and 28...♔xf7? 29 ♕xe8#, while after 28...b5? 29 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 (29...♔xf7 30 ♕a5 ♘xd6 31 ♕xc7+ ♔xe8 32 ♕xd6 ♘d7 33 ♕e6+ ♔d8 34 ♗a5+) 30 ♕g4! White wins masses of material, as he forces mate in the event of 30...♔xf7 31 ♕e6+ ♔g6 32 ♕e8+. **28...♕xe3** is the only way to

fight on, but after **29 fxe3 ♖xf7 30 ♖d1 h6 31 ♕f4 ♘c6 32 g4 ♘d8 33 h4** Houdini was completely in charge of the game and later won.

It's rare to find a clear-cut human-solvable tactic in a game between leading computer engines, since they so rarely allow them. So you may be wondering how come such a strong engine as Rybka missed this tactical blow. Well, it didn't. The problem was that it viewed this as the lesser evil, because in some alternative lines it had seen very deeply hidden wins for White. Sometimes you can be too artificially intelligent for your own good!

64) Gudok – O. Saenko

Ukrainian Corr. Ch 2009-11

28...♘a5!!

Black's queen sacrifice is simple enough, but many players miss moves that give up the queen, even when they are fully capable of calculating the variations. Other moves fail to punch home Black's attack:

a) 28...♕c8? 29 ♗xg6 hxg6 30 ♖xc4 ♕f5 31 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 32 ♕e4 is at least OK for White.

b) 28...h6? 29 ♗xh6 (not 29 ♗xg6? ♘a5; 29 ♕h3 hxg5 {29...♘a5? 30 ♖xc7 ♘b3+ 31 ♔xa2 ♖a8+ 32 ♔b1 ♖xc7 33 ♕e6+ ♔h7 34 ♖xh6+ ♗xh6 35 ♗xg6+} 30 ♕e6+ ♕f7 31 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 32 ♖xc4 and White should survive) 29...♘a5 30 ♖c3 ♘b3+ 31 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 32 ♗xg6 leaves attack and defence in equilibrium: 32...♗xh6 33 ♕xh6 ♕g7 34 ♕g5 followed by ♕f5.

29 ♖c3 (the main idea is 29 ♖xc7 ♘b3+ 30 ♔xa2 ♖a8+ 31 ♔b1 ♖xc7 with ...♖a1# to follow) **29...♘b3+ 30 ♔xa2** (30 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 is hopeless for White, as he is material down, with Black's attack still the stronger of the two) **30...♕a5+ 31 ♔b1 ♕a1+ 32 ♔c2 ♘d4+ 33 ♔d2 ♘xe4+! 34 fxe4 ♖xb2+ 35 ♘xb2 ♕xb2+ 0-1**

Chapter 3

65) It is striking that the blunder **102 ♖a4?** has been played more often than not when this position has arisen in practice. As John Nunn pointed out in *Nunn's Chess Endings Volume 2*, the instinct to put the rook behind the passed pawn is very strong, even when it is a fatal error. After **102...♔b3 103 ♖a8** (103 ♖h4 ♖c2+ 104 ♔d1 a2 is simpler) **103...♖c2+ 104 ♔d1** (forced in view of 104 ♔b1 a2+ 105 ♔a1 ♖c1#) **104...a2 105 ♖b8+ ♔c4** White cannot avoid the lost ending of ♖ vs ♕. **106 ♖c8+ ♔d5 107 ♖d8+ ♔e6 108 ♔xc2** (after 108 ♖e8+ ♔d7 109 ♖a8, the deathblow is 109...♖b2! followed by ...♖b1+ and ...a1♕) **108...a1♕** and Black won without much difficulty.

Let's see why other moves on the fourth rank survive. 102 ♖c4 ♔b3 103 ♖c8 draws because White keeps a grip on the c-file, which means that his king stays close enough to stop the black pawn: 103...♖h2 (103...a2 104 ♖b8+ ♔a3 105 ♖a8+) 104 ♖b8+ ♔a2 is a standard rook's-pawn draw. 102 ♖d4 (or any other square to the right, with 102 ♖h4 being the most natural) draws as 102...♔b3 can be met by checks from the side: 103 ♖d3+ (even 103 ♖d1 holds the draw, because after 103...♖c2+ 104 ♔b1 a2+ 105 ♔a1 the rook guards the back rank) 103...♔a4 104 ♖d4+.

66) 43 ♗xd4! uses a little piece of tactics to pick off a pawn, and gives White a technically winning endgame. The critical line runs 43...♘xd4?! 44 c4+ ♔e5 (44...♔c5? 45 b4+) 45 f4+ ♔xf4

46 ♔xd4, with a pawn ending where White comfortably wins the race; for example, 46...f5 47 b4 g5 48 b5 axb5 49 cxb5 followed by advancing the a-pawn.

In the game, after **43 f4?** (thinking too passively, White prevents ...♘e5+) **43...b5**, the opportunity was gone (44 ♗xd4?? ♘xd4 45 c4+ bxc4+ 46 bxc4+ ♔c5), and a draw was soon agreed.

67) With **48 h8♕+!**, White gives up his passed pawn in order to force a pawn ending with 2 vs 3! But his king is able to take the high ground, and Black's extra pawn is as much an obstacle as anything else. Instead, 48 ♔g2? ♔h8! cuts out White's promotion idea, and with it his winning chances. **48...♖xh8 49 ♖xh8 ♔xh8 50 ♔g2 ♔g7 51 ♔g3 f5** (51...♔g6 52 ♔f4 ♔h6 53 ♔f5 ♔g7 54 f4 is an easy win for White, as he takes on f6 and then d5; 51...♔f8 52 ♔f4 ♔e8 53 ♔f5 ♔e7 54 f4 is a similar story, while after 51...♔h6 52 ♔g4 ♔g6 53 ♔f4! the black king must give ground) **52 ♔f4 ♔f6 53 f3** (this critical tempo-move puts Black in zugzwang) **53...♔e6 54 ♔g5 f4** (54...f6+ 55 ♔f4! {55 ♔g6? f4! is a draw} 55...♔e7 56 ♔xf5 ♔f7 57 f4 ♔g7 58 ♔e6 ♔g6 59 ♔xd5 ♔f5 leads to a pawn-race where Black loses by one move) **55 ♔g4!** (55 ♔xf4? ♔f6 56 ♔g4 ♔g6 is a draw) **55...♔e7** (55...♔f6 56 ♔xf4 now leaves Black in zugzwang) **56 ♔f5!** (forcing a concession) **56...f6 57 ♔xf4** (now that ...♔f6 is impossible) **57...♔e6 58 ♔g4** (other king moves would even lose!) **58...♔e7 59 ♔h5 ♔f7 60 ♔h6 f5 61 f4 1-0**. Black has been outflanked, and his pawns will drop off.

68) 63 ♖d8!! essentially paralyses Black. The variations are simple enough – the main challenge is to see the move at all:

a) 63...c2 advances the pawn too far, and after 64 ♖c8+ it is lost to a skewer.

b) 63...♔c6 64 ♖c8+ and now 64...♗c7 is the only way to save the pawn, but allows 65 e7 c2 66 e8♕+.

c) 63...♔d5 walks into a pin, allowing 64 e7 c2 65 e8♕ (or 65 ♖c8) 65...c1♕ 66 ♕e6+, etc.

Instead, 63 e7? ♗xe7 64 ♔xe7 ♔d4 is a simple draw, and the obvious check chosen in the game, **63 ♖c8+?**, also throws the win away. After **63...♔d4!** Black's pieces are well-coordinated, and White cannot make progress: **64 ♖d8** (64 ♖c6 ♗a3 gets White nowhere) **64...♔e5**. The king defends the bishop from a good square, without allowing a pin. If it were Black to play in this position, he would lose due to zugzwang, but White has no way to transfer the move to Black. After **65 ♖c8 ♔d4 66 ♔f6 ♗a3 67 ♔f5 ♔d3** the draw was clear.

69) 35...♗f7? loses due to some tricky ideas where the knight and pawns dominate the bishop and king. 35...♔f8 is one of a number of safe moves, but it probably doesn't give Black real winning chances. After **36 ♘c6 ♗xc4 37 ♘xa7 ♗b3** Black had no doubt seen the lines 38 a5 bxa5 39 b6 ♗d5 and 38 ♘c8 ♗xa4 39 ♘xb6 ♗xb5. However, after **38 a5! bxa5 39 ♘c6!** it turns out that Black can't stop the b-pawn without losing his bishop *and* pawn. **39...♗c4** (39...♗a4 40 ♘e7+ ♔f7 41 b6 and the pawn queens) **40 b6 ♗a6 41 ♘xa5** (eliminating Black's passed pawn and supporting his own – that's really bad luck for Black) **41...f5 42 b7 ♗xb7 43 ♘xb7 ♔f7 44 g4** and White won a few moves later.

70) 49...♔e6! seeks to exchange h-pawn for f-pawn, and with care, Black can achieve this without letting the b-pawn run through to promote. Black must avoid a lost ♖+♙ vs ♖ ending, which is why the king moves to e6 rather than e4. 50 ♔xh3 ♔f5 51 ♔g3 is a drawn ♖+2♙ vs ♖ ending, but not for a deep or complex reason; it's because Black immediately wins one of the pawns without the other queening: 51...♖d5! 52 ♖b3 (52 b5 ♖d3+ 53 ♔g2 ♔xf4 54 b6 ♖d8 is simpler) 52...♖d4 53 b5 (53 ♖c3 ♖xb4 is a standard draw with ♖+♙ vs ♖) 53...♖xf4 54 b6 (Black draws after 54 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 55 ♔xf3 ♔e5 as his king is within the 'square' of the pawn) 54...♖g4+ 55 ♔f3 ♖g8 and the rook gets back in time to stop the pawn.

Other continuations fail as follows: 49...♔c4? leads to a lost ♔+♙ vs ♔ position after 50 ♔xh3 ♖xb4 51 ♖xb4+ ♔xb4 52 ♔g4 ♔c5 53 ♔f5. 49...♖b8? 50 b5 ♖h8 51 ♔g3 ♔e4 52 ♖b4+ and 53 ♔h2 is winning for White. 49...h2? 50 ♖xh2 ♖xb4 51 ♖e2 leaves the black king cut off, so White wins. In the game, **49...♔e4? 50 ♖e2+ ♔d3 51 ♖h2 ♔e4 52 ♖xh3 ♖xb4 53 ♖h8** allowed White to exploit the poor positions of the black king and rook. A check on the e-file will cut the king off from the pawn, while the black rook is powerless to intervene. **53...♔d5 54 ♖e8 ♔d6 55 ♔g5 1-0**. White will win using the 'Lucena' technique, which you will find in any good endgame textbook.

71) On c7, the white king is perfectly placed to be hunted down by Black's king, rook and queen, so he should immediately play 69...a2! 70 ♖xh8 (70 ♖a4 ♖xh7+ 71 ♔c8 ♖hb7 72 ♖d8+ ♔c6 73 ♖c4+ ♔b5 and Black wins, while 70 ♖h1 loses after 70...♖b1 or 70...♖xh7+ 71 ♖xh7 a1♕) 70...a1♕ 71 ♖d8+ ♔c5. Although White will be a rook up, Black will give mate, since White's rooks and queen are all on the edge of the board and cannot provide any shelter for their king:

a) 72 h8♕ ♕a7+ 73 ♔c8 ♖b8#.

b) 72 ♖c4+ ♔xc4 73 h8♕ ♕a5+ 74 ♔d7 ♕d5+ (74...♕xd8+ is also a clear 'geometrical' win) 75 ♔e7 ♖b7+ 76 ♔f6 ♖f7+ 77 ♔g5 ♕g2+ hounds the king to its death.

c) 72 ♖c8!? ♕d1!? 73 ♖c4+ (73 h8♕ ♕d6#) 73...♔xc4 74 h8♕ ♕d5! (a strong quiet move) 75 ♕h4+ e4 and White will soon be mated.

The move Black played, **69...♖c3+?**, allows White to improve his king position significantly. 70 ♔d7! a2 71 ♖xh8 a1♕ 72 ♖d8! is similar to line 'c' above, but White's better king position enables him to draw: 72...♕a7+ 73 ♔e8+ ♔e6 74 ♖h6+ ♔f5 75 h8♕ ♕a4+ with a draw by perpetual check.

72) Let's first note the basic point that 60...d2?? 61 ♖f8+ followed by ♖xf1 is a disaster for Black. 60...♖f2+! gains crucial time and renders the f-file skewer irrelevant as the white rook arriving on f2 will be a step behind the black d-pawn. Then:

a) 61 ♔h3 d2 62 d7 (62 ♖f8+ ♔e6 63 ♖xf2 d1♕ is hopeless for White because his pawns aren't going anywhere) 62...d1♕ 63 d8♕+ ♕xd8 64 ♖xd8 ♖f3+ followed by ...♖xc3 gives Black a won rook ending.

b) 61 ♔g1 avoids ...♖f3+ ideas but fails because 61...d2 62 d7 d1♕+ is now a promotion check.

c) 61 ♔g3 d2 62 d7 ♖f3+! (after 62...d1♕? 63 d8♕+ ♕xd8 64 ♖xd8 Black fails to pick up a white pawn, and the ending is drawn) and again Black achieves a won rook ending because 63

♔xf3 d1♕+ is a decisive promotion check.

Lafuente chose **60...♔g7??**, avoiding a skewer on the f-file, but this move is much too slow in a race situation. Let's give him the benefit of the doubt and assume this was a time-scramble! **61 d7 d2 62 d8♕ d1♕ 63 ♕xd1 ♖xd1 64 c6 1-0**. White's c-pawn will promote after 64...♖d2+ 65 ♔g1.

73) 48 ♖xe6+!. This is a thematic tactic in ♖+2♙ vs ♖+♙ endings, and easily missed at the end of a tiring long game. I have a painful memory of losing a costly last-round game in a weekend congress due to precisely this idea. The pawn ending after **48...♖xe6 49 f5+ ♔f7 50 fxe6+ ♔xe6** is won for White, but her next move needs to be accurate: **51 ♔h5!** (51 ♔f4?? is only a draw) **51...♔f7 52 ♔h6! ♔g8 53 ♔g6! 1-0**. White has the opposition, and therefore wins.

74) 44...♖xf2+! 45 ♔xf2 ♔d6 and ...♘c4 follows, winning a whole rook. Instead after **44...♘c4? 45 ♖c5 ♘e5 46 ♖c3 ♖xa4 47 ♗b6 ♖c4 48 ♖b3 ♖c1+?! 49 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 50 ♔g3 h5 51 h4 ♘g6?! 52 hxg5 fxg5 53 ♗e3** the game was unclear, ending in a draw after further ups and downs.

75) 71...♖g4+! is clearly worth trying, even if you aren't completely sure of the assessment. Doubled pawns are usually less effective than connected ones. After 72 fxg4 ♘xd6 we have ♘ + doubled pawns vs ♘. As John Nunn explains in *Nunn's Chess Endings Volume 1*, this is generally drawn with rook's pawns, but normally won with knight's pawns (centre and bishop's pawns are more evenly divided). However, the white pawns are poorly supported here, and this position is in fact drawn: 73 ♔h3 (73 ♔g3 ♔g6 74 ♔f4 ♘f7 picks off the g5-pawn) 73...♔g6 74 ♔h4 ♘e4 75 ♘f4+ ♔g7 76 g6 (the pawn is now out on a limb, but 76 ♔h5 ♘g3+ 77 ♔h4 ♘e4 and 76 ♘e6+ ♔g6 77 ♘f8+ ♔g7 78 ♘d7 ♔g6 get White nowhere) 76...♔h6! (other moves lose) 77 ♔h3 ♔g7 78 ♔g2 ♘f6 79 ♔f3 (79 g5 ♘e4) 79...♘g8 80 ♔e4 ♘e7 and the g6-pawn drops, leaving a simply drawn ♘+♙ vs ♘ position.

Instead Black chose **71...♘xd6?** and lost after **72 ♘xf4 ♔g7 73 ♔g3 ♘f7 74 ♘e6+ ♔g6 75 f4 ♔f5 76 ♘d4+ ♔e4 77 ♘f3 ♘d8 78 ♔g4 ♘e6 79 f5 1-0**. Perhaps he had given up and was just going through the motions. Many saving possibilities go untaken when in such a mind-set. Let's also note that 71...♖h4? 72 ♖f6+ ♔e7 73 ♖xf5 ♖xh5 is a lost rook ending.

76) The tactical liquidation **51...♖xe3!** puts the result beyond any doubt: **52 fxe3** (52 ♖xe3 ♘xe3+ 53 fxe3 ♔g3 is an even more simply won pawn ending for Black) **52...♘h2+ 53 ♔f2 ♘xf3 54 ♔xf3 g5 55 e4 g4+ 56 ♔g2 ♔h5 57 ♔f2 ♔g6 58 ♔g3 ♔g5 59 e5 ♔f5 60 e6 ♔xe6 61 ♔xg4** (Black easily wins the race to the b-pawns) **61...♔d5 62 ♔f3 ♔c4 63 ♔e2 ♔xb4 64 ♔d1 ♔b3 65 ♔c1 ♔a2 0-1**.

77) A knight can cover a lot of ground in a few moves if there is a check to speed it along the way. Despite appearances, White can take on h7 and bring his knight back quickly enough to obtain a comfortable draw: **47 ♘f8! e3 48 ♘xh7 e2 49 ♘g5 ♔d3** (49...e1♕?? 50 ♘f3+ is the key knight-check idea, while 49...♗c6 50 h7 e1♕ 51 h8♕+ is an important promotion check – White will continue 52 ♔xf5, when a draw is

likely) **50 ♘f3** (50 h7?? costs White material after 50...e1♕ 51 h8♕ ♕f2+ 52 ♘f3 ♕e3+) **50...♗c6 51 ♘e1+** (51 h7? ♗xf3 52 ♔xf3 {but not 52 h8♕? ♗e4! followed by ...e1♕ with an extra piece} 52...e1♕ 53 h8♕ leaves White defending an unpleasant queen ending) **51...♔d2 52 h7 ♔xe1 53 h8♕ ♔f1 54 ♕c8 e1♕** (there's nothing better for Black: 54...♗b5? 55 ♕xf5 e1♕ 56 ♕xb5+ favours White; 54...♗e4?? 55 ♕c4 ♔f2 56 ♕xb4 e1♕ 57 ♕xe1+ ♔xe1 58 b4 and the bishop can't stop both pawns) **55 ♕xc6 ♕xh4+ 56 ♔xf5** with a drawn queen ending.

78) Yes, he did. 39...♔d4! wins. Black clears the way for the c-pawn while keeping White's pieces at arm's length. After 40 ♘xh7 (if White tries to defend, Black's queenside pawns are simply too strong; e.g., 40 a5 c4 41 a6 ♗b6 42 ♘d7 ♗a7 43 ♘e5 b3) 40...c4 41 g6 (41 ♘f8 b3 42 ♘e6+ ♔e3) 41...b3 42 axb3 (42 g7 b2 43 g8♕ b1♕+ 44 ♔e6 avoids a skewer, but after 44...♕e4+ 45 ♔f7 ♕d5+ 46 ♔g7 ♕xg8+ 47 ♔xg8 c3 Black gets another queen) 42...cxb3 43 g7 b2 44 g8♕ it seems White has won the race, but Black not only promotes with check, but wherever the white king moves, the white queen will fall victim to a skewer: 44...b1♕+ 45 ♔f4 (45 ♔e6 ♕b3+) 45...♕f1+ and ...♕g1+.

79) 60...h2! deflects the white king and so allows Black's minor pieces to make a critical gain of time:

a) 61 ♔g2 ♘g4 62 ♖b4 (62 a6 ♗d3 and ...♗xe4+) 62...♗d3 63 e5 (63 a6 b2 64 a7 ♗xe4+ 65 ♖xe4 h1♕+ 66 ♔xh1 b1♕+) 63...♗e4+ 64 ♖xe4 h1♕+ 65 ♔xh1 ♘f2+ 66 ♔g2 ♘xe4 67 a6 b2 68 a7 b1♕ 69 a8♕ ♕c2+ and mate follows.

b) 61 ♔xh2 ♘f3+ 62 ♔g2 ♘d4 (intending ...♗b5 followed by promoting the b-pawn) 63 ♖b4 (63 a6 ♗b5 64 a7 b2 65 a8♕ b1♕ gives Black a decisive attack) 63...♘c6! 64 ♖xc4 (64 ♖b6 ♘xa5 65 ♔f3 ♗d3 smoothes the way for the b-pawn's advance) 64...b2 65 ♖xc6 b1♕ is winning for Black.

Other moves either make no progress or throw away the win: 60...♘d7?! 61 ♖b4 ♘e5 62 ♖b6 just repeats the puzzle position, where Black still needs to find 62...h2!. 60...f6? 61 a6! ♗xa6 62 ♖xa6 b2 63 ♖b6 ♘c4 64 ♖b7+ ♔g6 65 ♔xh3 will lead to a draw, as did **60...♘d3? 61 a6 ♗xa6** ½-½ in the game.

80) After **84...♘h3! 85 f8♕** (not 85 ♔f3?? ♘g5+ or 85 ♔f1?? g2+ 86 ♔xg2 ♘f4+ and ...♘e6) **85...g2**, the draw is surprisingly simple. White can't take the knight without allowing the pawn to queen, and can't take the pawn without losing his queen to a knight fork. So all he can do is give queen checks.

81) 33 ♗c4!

White wins by playing for mate. 33 ♕f5+? is much less clear:

a) 33...♔h8?! 34 ♗c4?! (34 ♕c8+ ♔h7 repeats, so White has another chance to find 35 ♗c4!) 34...♕g1+ 35 ♔h3 (35 ♔xg1? c1♕+ 36 ♗f1 d3 gives White nothing) 35...♕xf2 and Black can put up further resistance.

b) 33...g6 34 ♕xf6 c1♕ 35 ♕f7+ ♔h8 36 ♗c4 and after both 36...♕h1+ 37 ♔h3 ♕xc4 38 ♕xc4 ♕xe4 and 36...♕g1+ 37 ♔h3 ♕xc4 38 ♕xc4 ♕xf2 a tough queen ending lies ahead.

33...c1♕

Now White delivers checkmate. After 33...♕h1+ 34 ♔xh1 c1♕+ 35 ♔g2 Black can only avoid being mated by giving up his queen for the bishop. A

typical mating line is 35...♕xa3 36 ♕g8+ ♔g6 37 ♗f7+ ♔g5 38 h4+ ♔g4 39 ♕c8#.

34 ♕g8+ ♔g6 35 ♕e8+ 1-0

Possible finishes are 35...♔g5 36 h4+ ♔g4 37 ♗e6# and 35...♔h7 36 ♗g8+ ♔h8 37 ♗f7+ ♔h7 38 ♗g6#.

82) 54 b5! is the only drawing move, gaining time and a square for the king: 54...♗xb5 (forced; 54...d3? 55 bxc6 d2 56 c7 d1♕ 57 c8♕; 54...♗a8? 55 b6 ensures that any lines where Black sacrifices his bishop will result in White queening his b-pawn) 55 ♔d5 (not only attacking the d4-pawn, but also preventing ...♔e4) 55...d3 (55...♔g3 56 ♔xd4 ♔f2 57 ♔c5 ♗xe2 58 ♗xe2 ♔xe2 59 h5 and the pawn-race ends in a draw; 55...♗xe2 56 ♗xe2 gives Black nothing without the ...♔e4 follow-up) 56 exd3 ♗xd3 57 ♔d4 with an ending that would be a straightforward draw even without White's h-pawn.

54 ♔d6? loses to 54...♗e4 followed by ...d3, while in the game, **54 ♗g6? ♗e4!** gave Black an objectively won position, as the queen ending after the pawn-race is lost for White, though it would have been tricky to win in practice. After 55 ♗xe4 ♔xe4 56 h5 d3 57 h6 (57 exd3+ fails because of a promotion check: 57...♔xd3 58 h6 e2 59 h7 e1♕+) 57...dxe2 58 h7 e1♕ 59 h8♕ the tablebase tells us Black should win. Of course, at the board you wouldn't know that, but it is fairly clear that this position is difficult for White, and that the clear draw he had available on the previous move is greatly preferable.

83) 37...♖a8! keeps reasonable drawing chances. Black's knights can't stop the white pawns on their own, so Black must preserve his rook for the time being. This is the only square where it can't be attacked (e.g., 37...♖f8? fails to 38 fxg7+ ♔xg7 39 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 40 d7, and 37...♖xd6? to the obvious 38 f7) and the upshot is that White lacks the time to force one of his pawns through:

a) 38 f7? loses: 38...♘xf1 39 d7 g6 40 d8♕+ ♖xd8 41 ♘xd8 ♔g7.

b) 38 ♖f3 gxf6 39 d7 (39 ♖xe3 ♘c5) 39...♘g4 40 d8♕+ ♖xd8 41 ♘xd8 with a complex ending where Black has two pawns in return for the exchange.

c) 38 fxg7+ ♔xg7 39 ♖e1 (39 ♖f3 ♘c2 40 d7 ♘cd4 neatly neutralizes the d-pawn, the main point being 41 ♖g3+? ♔f6! 42 cxd4 ♘xd4 43 d8♕+?! ♖xd8 44 ♘xd8 ♘e2+ 45 ♔f2 ♘xg3 46 ♔xg3 c3 and the c-pawn promotes) 39...♘d5 and now both 40 ♖xe5 ♘b6 41 d7 ♘xd7 42 ♖e7+ ♔f6 43 ♖xd7 and 40 d7 e4 41 ♖d1 ♘xc3 42 d8♕ ♖xd8 43 ♖xd8 are endings where Black would be happy to achieve a draw, and has good chances of doing so.

The course of the game showed why the exchange of rooks is fatal for Black: **37...♘xf1? 38 ♘xd8 ♘c5** (38...gxf6 39 ♘b7 and the pawn promotes) **39 f7! ♘d7 40 ♘e6 ♘g3 41 ♘c5 1-0.**

84) 72 ♔h5! is the only good move, using the king to play for mate! If you saw that this move was necessary and that White's chances were at least OK, then you have solved the puzzle. However, it is interesting to see if Black can hold. ♔g6 is a powerful threat, so Black has little choice:

a) 72...♕d8 73 ♔g6 ♕e8+ 74 ♕xe8+ ♔xe8 75 ♔xg7 d2 76 ♘f2 (76 ♘e3? c3 77 f5 c2 78 f6 c1♕ 79 f7+ ♔d7 80 f8♕ ♕c3+ and ...♕xe3 with a draw) 76...c3 77 f5 c2 78 f6 d1♕ (78...c1♕?! 79 f7+ ♔d7 80 f8♕ d1♕ {80...♕c3+ is pointless with the knight safely on f2} 81 ♘xd1 ♕xd1 leaves Black a

tempo down on the 78...d1♕ line) 79 ♘xd1 cxd1♕ 80 f7+ ♔d7 81 f8♕ and a tough queen ending lies ahead, but White has excellent winning chances.

b) 72...♕c5+ 73 ♔g6 ♕c7 (the alternative 73...♕e7 74 ♕c8+ ♕e8+ 75 ♕xe8+ transposes to line 'a') 74 ♘e3 (threatening ♘d5) 74...♗c3 (74...♗d4? 75 ♕f5+ ♔e8 76 ♕e4+) 75 ♕f5+ ♔e8 76 ♕e4+ ♕e7 (76...♔f8? 77 ♕a8+; 76...♔d8 77 ♕d5+ ♕d7) 77 ♕a8+ (77 ♕xe7+? ♔xe7 78 ♘d5+ ♔d6 79 ♘xc3 ♔c5 leads to a draw) 77...♕d8 (77...♔d7 78 ♕c6+ ♔d8 79 ♘xc4 ♕g7+ 80 ♔f5 ♕d7+ 81 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 82 ♔e4 d2 83 ♘e3 and White should win) 78 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 79 ♘xc4 d2 80 ♘xd2 ♗xd2 81 ♔xh6 and White will win thanks to his active king.

The game ended very differently: **72 ♕c8+? ♔e7 73 f5 d2 74 ♕e6+ ♔d8 75 ♕g8+ ♔c7 76 ♕e6 d1♕ 77 ♕c6+ ♔b8 78 ♕e8+ ♕d8+ 0-1.**

85) D. Kovaliov – Naigebauer
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

37 ♗xd4! 1-0. White will force through his a-pawn after 37...exd4 38 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 39 a7.

86) Avetisian – Vdovichenko
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

70 ♖d8+! ♔e7 (70...♔c7 is met the same way) 71 hxg6 ♔xd8 72 g7 and the pawn promotes. White instead played **70 h6?**, after which 70...♔e7 followed by ...♔f7 would have steered the game to a safe draw.

87) Preethi – Ankit
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Black has a neat mate at his disposal: 41...♔f7! 42 ♗xf5 exf5 43 ♖xc3 ♖h5#. After **41...♖xd3??**, as played, Black should still be better, but the result is in doubt (in fact the game was later drawn after *White* missed a clear win!).

88) Meenakshi – Anwesh
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

33...♔e5! wins: once the rook is run out of squares on the fourth rank, Black will play ...♖d4#. Therefore the white rook is lost: 34 g3 (34 ♖h4 g5 35 ♖g4 h5; 34 ♖g4 h5 35 ♖h4 g5) 34...g5 35 ♖g4 h5. Unfortunately, Black forgot that snap mates are possible in the endgame, and after **33...♖d2?** the game eventually ended in a draw.

89) Solić – Pruijssers
Sarajevo 2010

63...♖a3!

This move hangs on to a draw, due to some stalemate resources. 63...♖g4? is met most simply by 64 ♖h6+, while 63...♖a5+? 64 ♔e6 ♖a6+ 65 ♔f7 ♖a7+ 66 ♔f8 ♖a8+ 67 ♔g7 ♖a7+ 68 ♖f7 ♖a5 69 ♖f4 ♖a7+ 70 ♔f6 ♖a6+ 71 ♔e5 ♖a5+ 72 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 73 ♔f3 ♖a3+ 74 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 75 ♔h3 will eventually lead to a win for White.

64 ♔f4

64 ♖g6?? loses to 64...♖a5+ 65 ♔f6 ♖a6+, while 64 ♖f7 ♖f3+ (64...♖xg3?? 65 ♖h7#) 65 ♔e6 ♖xg3 is a straightforward draw. White's best try is 64 g4+!? ♔xh4 65 ♖h6+ ♔g3 66 g5, but 66...♖a5+ is a technical draw, as the pawn is vulnerable to attack from behind.

64...♖f3+! (64...♖xg3! also draws, since 65 ♔xg3 is stalemate) **65 ♔xf3** (stalemate; 65 ♔e5 ♖xg3 is an easy draw) **½-½**

90) Lalith – Girish
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Black's king is cut off several files away from the pawn, and this would be decisive if White's king were better

placed. However, cutting off the attacker's king along a rank is a potent defensive method, and 65...♖c3! is sufficient to draw. If White tries to advance the pawn, it will fall victim to an attack by the black rook, while White has little else constructive to do. 66 f5 ♔c5 67 ♖d8 (67 ♖f4 ♔d6 68 f6 ♖c8) 67...♖a3 68 f6 ♖a7, 66 ♔f2 ♔c5 67 ♖d8 ♖a3 68 f5 ♖b3 (simply waiting until the pawn advances further) and 66 ♖d8 ♔c7 67 ♖d5 ♔c6 68 ♖d2 ♖a3 are typical lines.

Perhaps Black had already given up and was just 'going through the motions', because he chose the hopeless **65...♔c5? 66 ♖d1 ♖g8+ 67 ♔f3**, and soon resigned.

91) E. van Haastert – Vedder
KNSB Cup, Amersfoort 2010

65...♗e3 is the right way to handle White's idea of a pawn breakthrough by b5:

a) 66 b5?! ♗xd4+ 67 ♔b4 cxb5 (67...♗xc5+ and ...cxb5 is a completely safe draw) 68 c6 ♗b6 69 ♔xb5 ♗d8 should lead to a draw.

b) 66 ♗e5 ♗f2! 67 b5 ♗e1+! (not 67...cxb5?, losing to 68 ♔b4!) 68 ♔b3 cxb5 69 c6 ♗a5 and Black holds the draw without difficulty.

In the game, **65...♗g5? 66 b5! cxb5** (66...♗e3 67 bxc6 ♗xd4+ 68 ♔b4 and White gets a queen) **67 ♗e5! ♗d8** (67...♔f5 68 ♔b4 ♔e6 69 ♔xb5 ♔d7 70 c6+ ♔c8 71 ♔c5 and White wins) **68 ♔b4! g5 69 ♔xb5 g4 70 c6** allowed White to force through his c-pawn.

92) Caspi – Tunik
Israeli Team Ch 2010

76...♗g8! (76...♔f6? loses to 77 ♗f5!) **77 ♗d1** (77 ♗e2 ♔f6 78 ♗d3 ♔g5 is no different) **77...♔f6 78 ♗c2 ♔g5 ½-½**. After 79 h7 ♗xh7 80 ♗xh7 ♔g4 White is unable to save his last pawn.

93) Yu Yangyi – Lin Chen
Hefei (rapid) 2010

The direct 39...b3! 40 cxb3 c3! wins: 41 ♖c6 ♔d3 42 a5 c2 43 ♖xc2 (43 a6 ♗c3) 43...♔xc2 and White will not be able to liquidate Black's kingside pawns quickly enough.

In the game, a couple of errors cost Black the full point: **39...♔d4?** (too much subtlety – Black 'prepares' the pawn-break, but the time lost is more important) **40 a5 ♗c7?** (40...b3 41 cxb3 c3 is now only good enough to draw: 42 ♖c6 ♔d3 43 a6 ♗d4 44 h4 c2 45 ♔h2 ♗c3 {45...♔d2? 46 ♔g3 c1♕?! 47 ♖xc1 ♔xc1 48 ♔f4 and White wins} 46 ♖xc3+ ♔xc3 47 a7 c1♕ 48 a8♕ ♕f4+ 49 g3 is a likely draw, but White has whatever chances there are; 40...♔c5 is also a draw: 41 ♖b6 ♗c7 {41...b3 42 cxb3 c3 43 b4+} 42 ♖b7 ♗xa5 43 ♖xg7 b3 44 cxb3 cxb3 {44...c3? 45 ♖g4} 45 ♖d7 b2 46 ♖d1 and White will hold the draw by giving his up his rook for the b-pawn and exchanging off Black's f-pawn) **41 ♖a7 ♗f4 42 a6 b3 43 cxb3 c3 44 ♖a8 ♗d6 45 ♖c8 ♗c5 46 b4 ♗b6 47 ♖c6 ♗a7 48 ♖c7 1-0**.

94) Nogueiras – Quesada Perez
Havana 2010

58...♖xc5!

This temporary piece sacrifice is best by far. Other moves, such as 58...♔e7?, may keep some advantage, but allow White very serious drawing chances.

59 ♖xd7?!

This loses on the spot, but otherwise Black will be two good pawns up, while after 59 ♖d3 ♖c1 60 ♖xe3 ♗b5 61 ♖f3 ♔e7, Black will liquidate into a won pawn ending.

59...♖c1! 0-1

The finish is reminiscent of the 5th game of the 2008 Anand-Kramnik world championship match. Black intends ...e2, and there is nothing to be done about it.

95) Bruzon – Navara

Havana 2011

78...♖c4!

The vital point is to prevent the king from shepherding its pawn up the board. This is the fifth-rank cut-off, an important concept in rook endings, as highlighted in *Nunn's Chess Endings Volume 2*. One point Nunn made was "It is usually more important to establish a fifth-rank cut-off than to promote one's own pawn." 78...♖c5? 79 ♔f4 will lead to a drawn ♖ vs ♙ ending.

79 ♔g3

White can push his pawn, but with the king able to advance no further than the third rank, it falls victim to the black rook: 79 g5 ♔c2 80 g6 b2 81 ♖b8 (81 ♖a2 ♔c1 changes nothing) 81...b1♕ 82 ♖xb1 ♔xb1 83 g7 ♖c8 followed by ...♖g8 and ...♖xg7 – the white king is one move too slow.

79...♔c3 80 ♖f8

80 ♔h4 b2 allows Black a full queen, as White can't give up his rook for the pawn. After 80 ♖a3 ♔c2 81 ♖a1 b2 82 ♖f1 b1♕ 83 ♖xb1 ♔xb1 84 ♔h4 ♔c2 the white king is far enough up the board, but the problem is that it is on the wrong side of the pawn. If White could now play ♔f5, he would draw by keeping the black king at bay. But after 85 ♔h5 ♔d3 86 g5 ♔e4 87 ♔h6 ♔f5 the pawn is lost, while 85 ♔g5 ♔d3 86 ♔f5 is a move too slow: 86...♖c5+ 87 ♔f6 ♔e4 88 g5 ♖c6+ and ...♔f5.

80...b2 81 ♖f1 ♔b3 82 g5 ♖c1 0-1

After the continuation 83 ♖f8 b1♕ 84 ♖b8+ ♔c4 85 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 86 ♔f4 ♔d5 87 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 88 ♔g6 ♔e6 Black wins easily.

96) Vegjeleki – E. Staak

ICCF Corr. (Morra theme) 2007-11

28 a4!

The question is whether White can promote his b-pawn. After 28 ♖xc4? bxc4 29 a4 (29 ♖b1 ♖b8 30 ♔f3 c3 31 ♔e3 is also a move too slow) 29...♖b8 30 ♖b1 c3 31 a5 c2 he fails.

28...♖b8 (Black may have felt that he had matters under control, but there is a nasty sting in the tail; 28...♖xa4 29 ♖xa4 bxa4 30 ♖c8 is a simple win) **29 axb5 ♖xc1 30 ♖a8!** (White does not have to recapture the rook!) **30...♔f7 31 ♖xb8 1-0**. Black can't defend by putting his rook behind the b7-pawn, because the b5-pawn is in the way.

97) Kaidanov – Ehlvest

USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010

41 ♖c3!

White's mating threats on Black's back rank and against h7 trump Black's rook(s) on his seventh rank. Not 41 ♖a3? ♖dxb2+! 42 ♔c1 ♖b1+ 43 ♔c2 ♖4b2+ and ...♖xb5.

41...♖d8

41...♖bxb2+ 42 ♔c1! leaves the black rooks utterly helpless to do anything useful. He can't even give them up to produce stalemate, as his e6-pawn can move. 41...♖dxb2+ 42 ♔a1! ♖b1+ 43 ♔a2 ♖1b2+ 44 ♔a3 leaves the rooks similarly stymied on the b-file.

42 ♖c7! ♖f8 (42...♖f4 43 ♖xf7 ♖xf6 44 gxf6 is hopeless for Black) **43 ♘d7 1-0**. The advance of the b-pawn will cost Black a whole rook.

98) Philippe – Housieaux

French Team Ch 2010

38...♕g3+! is the right way to force perpetual check, since the king has no

way to escape via the queenside: 39 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 40 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 41 ♔d3 (41 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 42 ♔xf2 bxc6 is of course a very safe draw) 41...♕g3+ 42 ♔c2 ♕g2+ 43 ♔b3 ♕b2+ 44 ♔a4 ♕xa2+ 45 ♔b4 ♕b2+ 46 ♔c5 ♕d4+ 47 ♔b5 ♕b2+, etc.

Black chose the wrong square in the game: **38...♕e2+?** would have lost if White had found 39 ♔h3! ♕h2+ (39...♕e3+ 40 ♔g4 changes nothing) 40 ♔g4 ♕g3+ 41 ♔f5 ♕f4+ 42 ♔e6 ♕xf7+ (42...bxc6 allows 43 ♕e8+, mating) 43 ♗xf7 bxc6 44 ♔xe5 and White wins with the extra piece.

99) Goroshkova – Savvopulo
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

44 ♕g8+! ♕g7

After 44...♔h5 45 ♕e8+ ♕g6 (or 45...♔h4 46 g3+ ♔xh3 47 ♕h5#) 46 ♕e7 Black can't protect his b7-pawn, as 46...♖xb6 loses to 47 ♖xb6 ♕xb6 48 ♕f7+ ♕g6 49 g4+.

45 ♕e8+ ♕f7 46 ♕xc6+ 1-0

Black will have to give up his queen for White's b-pawn.

100) Le Quang – Navara
Havana 2011

63 ♔b5!

This is a clear win, but needs to be calculated accurately, as the black a-pawn is now free to run. The main point is that the advance of the c-pawn will create mating threats against the black king. 63 ♔a3? ♔d8 (63...♖c6? 64 ♔b4 ♖a6 repeats the puzzle position) is likely to lead to a drawn ending where White has f- and h-pawns.

63...a3 (63...♔f8 64 ♖h7 ♔g8 65 ♖d7 does not help Black) **64 c6 ♖a5+!?** (64...a2 65 c7 a1♕ 66 c8♕# shows White's idea in pure form) **65 ♔b4!** (65 ♔xa5?? a2 66 c7 a1♕+ is at least OK for Black) **65...♖a4+ 66 ♔b3! ♔f8** (66...a2 67 c7 ♖a3+ 68 ♔c2 ♖c3+ is a nice continuation of the theme, but 69 ♔b2! safely wins the a-pawn) **67 c7** (67 ♖d7 also wins) **67...♖a8 68 ♖h7 1-0**

101) Harika – Dreev
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

After 30...f5! the threat of ...♖gh8, with ...♖h1# coming soon, will cost White a rook: 31 ♖xf5 (31 ♖e3 ♖gh8 32 ♔f1 ♖xh2 33 ♔e1 ♖g2) 31...♖gh8 and now:

a) 32 ♔f1 ♖xh2 33 ♔e1 ♖e8+ 34 ♔d2 (34 ♖e3 ♖xe3+ 35 fxe3 g3 and Black's pawns run through: 36 ♖xf3 ♖h1+ 37 ♔e2 g2) 34...♖xf2+ 35 ♔d3 g3 36 ♖f6+ ♔e5 37 ♖g6 g2 38 d6 ♖e2.

b) 32 ♖f6+ ♔e7 (not 32...♔e5? 33 ♖e6+ ♔xd5 34 ♖e1 ♖xh2 35 ♖d1+ ♔e6 36 ♖e3+ ♔f5 37 ♖d5+ with a draw by perpetual check) 33 ♖e6+ ♔d7 34 ♔f1 ♖xh2 35 ♔e1 g3 36 ♖xf3 (36 fxg3 f2+ and ...♖f8) 36...g2 37 ♖f7+ ♔c8 38 ♖g6 ♖h1+ and ...g1♕.

30...♖h5?! is quite good, but much less clear, while Dreev's choice in the game, **30...♖e8? 31 ♖e3 ♖xe3 32 fxe3 ♔xd5 33 ♖xg4**, only led to a slightly favourable rook ending for Black; the game was drawn.

102) Lobzhanidze – Aring
Stuttgart 2010

Hopefully you realized that if Black is to draw this ending, the most likely methods are stalemate and perpetual check. From that, it is not such a large leap of the imagination to see that if Black's king were on h5, then ...♕xf4+ would be a threat. Thus 50...♔h5! is the solution, when not even 51 ♕b2 avoids an immediate draw, since Black has 51...♕xf4+ 52 ♔g1 (52 ♔g2 ♕d2+ is the same) 52...♕c1+, forcing 53 ♕xc1 stalemate. 51 ♕g2 ♕xf4+ gives White

no winning chances, since Black can choose between perpetual check or eliminating the b4-pawn.

In the game, Black played **50...♕f3?**, when 51 ♔g1! would have forced the miserable 51...♕a3 (since 51...♕xh3?! is met by 52 ♕g2), when there is no particular reason why White should not win the queen ending.

Chapter 4

103) He certainly could have done, because 41...♗xh3!! forces mate: 42 ♔xh3 ♕h5#, 42 ♗xh3 ♕g1#, 42 ♖f2 ♕g3+ 43 ♔h1 ♗xg2+ 44 ♖xg2 ♕h3+ 45 ♖h2 ♕f1#, 42 ♗f1 ♗xf1 43 ♖xf1 ♕g3+ 44 ♔h1 ♕h3# or 42 ♖xh3 ♕f4+ 43 ♔h1 ♕c1+ 44 ♔h2 ♕g1#.

104) 31...♖e7?? was a very bad idea, because **32 ♘g3!** creates a double attack (but not 32 g4? ♕e5+, which is good for Black). **32...♕g5** defends both pieces, but fails because the queen is overloaded. After **33 ♖xe7 1-0** Black loses a whole piece due to 33...♕xe7 (33...♘xg3 34 ♖e8+) 34 ♘xh5 ♕e5+ 35 ♘g3.

105) White opens up an attack on the f6-knight and the mating square g7 beyond it: **50 d5! cxd5** (or: 50...♖xa6 51 ♕e5 {threatening ♕c7+, mating} 51...cxd5 52 ♗e1! transposes to the next note; 50...♘xd5? 51 ♕g7#; 50...exd5 51 ♕e5 is an instant win for White) **51 ♗e1!** (overloading the black bishop) **51...♕f1** (pinning the bishop as a last-gasp defensive throw; 51...♖xa6 52 ♕e5 leaves Black's fundamental problem unsolved, while 51...♗xe1 52 ♕xf6 leads to a speedy mate) **52 ♕e5 ♘g4** (52...♕xe1 53 ♕c7+ and Black is mated) **53 ♕c7+ 1-0**.

106) White can play for mate – the poor position of the black king was a strong clue. **52 ♗e6!** threatens 53 ♖f8+ ♔g7 54 ♖g8#, and Black must make major concessions to avoid it: **52...h6 53 g6** (now White threatens simply 54 ♖h7#, so Black must give up his knight) **53...♘f4+ 54 ♖xf4 ♔g7 55 ♗f7 a3 56 ♖a4** (56 ♖f3 is perhaps simpler, but only a gross blunder would cost White victory) **56...h4 57 ♖xh4 a2 58 ♗xa2 1-0**.

107) 23...fxe5!? has the point that 24 ♘xe5? loses to 24...d4!. White can try 24 ♖xc6, but this is an idea White could have tried in the game in any case, so Black has nothing to lose by playing this way. 24...♕xc6 25 ♘xe5 (25 ♕xe5? ♕c1+ 26 ♔h2 ♖xf3) 25...♕e8 leaves White scraping around for compensation that is unlikely to prove at all adequate.

108) 36...♘xg3!

Before White can hold his position together with ♗e1, Black smashes apart the white king's defences. It is intuitively clear that Black has a powerful attack, and that White's defence, if possible at all, will be arduous. This kind of slow-burning attack is still something humans find easier to assess than computers do.

37 hxg3 e4

This follow-up is essential, restricting the white pieces and giving the b8-bishop a beautiful diagonal. The game concluded as follows: **38 ♕d1 ♖xg3 39 ♖ff2** (39 ♗e1 ♖g4 intending ...♖cg8 and ...f4; 39 ♕h5 ♖g5 40 ♕h3 ♖cg8 intending ...♕f7 and ...♖h5) **39...♖cg8** (now ...f4 is a deadly threat) **40 ♔f1** (40 ♕h5 ♖3g5 41 ♕h3 ♖g4 42 ♔f1 ♗g3 leaves White helpless; 40 ♗e1 ♖3g5 and ...♕d6) **40...♖3g5** (there's no good

reply to the threat of ...♗g3) **41 ♔e1** (41 ♗e1 ♕d6 and ...♕h2; 41 a5 ♗g3 with ...f4 coming soon in most lines; 41 ♕c1 ♕f7! {intending ...♕h5 followed by ...♖xg2} 42 ♔e1 ♗g3 43 ♗f1 ♖h5) **41...♗g3 42 ♗h3 ♕f7 0-1**.

109) 28 ♘c5+! is the way to smash through Black's barricades: 28...bxc5 (28...♔d8 29 ♘a6 and ♘xc4) 29 dxc5 and, with moves like ♘xc4, ♖xa5 and ♘d6 coming, White's pawns will sweep all from their path; e.g., 29...♘d5 30 c6+ ♔e8 31 ♘xc4 f6 32 ♗d4 ♔f7 33 ♖xa5 or 29...g5 30 fxg5 ♖h5 31 ♖xa5 ♖xg5 32 ♘xc4 ♘d5 33 c6+ ♔e8 34 ♖a8.

In the game, **28 ♘b2?! ♘d5 29 ♘bxc4 g5** gave Black time to solidify his queenside and gain counterplay on the kingside.

110) 26...♖f6! makes use of the pin on the b8-h2 diagonal, gaining time by hitting the g6-bishop. 27 ♗xc7? is no good due to 27...♖xg6+ and ...♘xc7, and after **27 ♗d3 ♖e6** (as played), the pin on the e-file costs White material. **28 ♗xc7 ♖xe1** left Black the exchange up, but White's bishop-pair meant he was still in the game. Black nevertheless won.

111) 22 ♘e4!

The knight moves into the attack with decisive effect.

22...♗e7

The white knight is immune in view of 22...♖xe4 23 ♕xf8 and 22...♘xe4 23 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 24 ♕xh6#. After 22...♕c7 23 ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 (23...♔h8 is met by 24 ♘xf6!) 24 ♘xf6! ♕xd6 25 ♘xe8++ White will emerge a piece up, while 22...♕xf5 23 ♗d3 spells doom for the black queen.

23 ♗xf6!

This queen sacrifice is the key follow-up idea.

23...♗xd6

Neither 23...gxf6 24 ♘xf6+ ♔h8 25 ♕f4 nor 23...♗xf6 24 ♘xf6+ gxf6 (24...♔h8 25 ♘xe8) 25 ♕xf6 ♖g8 26 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 27 ♕f6+ ♔h7 28 ♖xb7+, when White mates, offers Black any hope.

24 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 25 ♘g5! ♗xh2+ (25...hxg5 26 ♖xg5+ ♔h7 27 ♖h5+ ♔g8 28 ♖h8#) **26 ♔h1 1-0**

112) 23...♘d5! is a little interfering idea that suddenly gives White a problem with his rook on d6. The fact that such an unpromising-looking position can offer a resource like this suggests that we should always avoid a negative mind-set, even when our position seems utterly without prospects. 24 exd5 (24 ♖6xd5? cxd5 25 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 26 exd5 ♕xc2) 24...cxd5! (24...♕xd6 25 ♘e4 offers White more play) 25 ♖6xd5 ♕xc3! (not 25...♗xd5? 26 ♘xd5) leads to a position with equal material, but radically changed prospects. White's cluster of pieces on the kingside now look misplaced, while White's queenside and back ranks are shaky. Black's practical prospects would be somewhat better, especially with White psychologically reeling after losing control of his dominant position.

The game followed a very different path. After **23...h6? 24 ♕e3** the opportunity was gone, as White can defend the rook by ♕c5. Black went on to lose a long and painful game.

113) 21...♖xd5!

Black can destroy White's pawn-centre, thanks to the exposed white king and the loose knight on c4. Knowing the mating pattern with a queen/knight double check on the long diagonal would be

a big help in spotting this idea. Neither knight sacrifice works: 21...♘xd5? 22 exd5 ♖xd5 23 ♔g1! or 21...♘xe4? 22 ♘a5!.

22 ♖xd5

The main point is 22 exd5 ♘xd5 23 ♘a5 ♘f4++ and ...♕g2#. Eliminating the knight by 22 ♗xf6 doesn't help either in view of 22...♖xd1.

22...♘xd5 23 ♕b3 (the other key idea is 23 exd5 ♕xd5+ and ...♖xc4) **23...♗xb2 24 ♘xb2 ♘c3 25 f3 ♕d7** and Black won comfortably.

114) Definitely not, because Black replies **18...♕c6!**, when **19 ♕xb8+ ♔e7** leaves the white queen trapped. After **20 ♕xh8** (20 ♕a7 ♖a8 makes no real difference) **20...♗xh8 21 b3 ♘g4** Black went on to win comfortably.

If you thought White's idea was refuted by the apparently simple reply 18...♕d8?, then you missed the tactic that no doubt attracted Rapport: 19 ♗g5! regains the piece with some advantage in view of 19...♗xg5? 20 ♕xe5+ and 21 ♕xh8+.

115) 35...♘f1!!

This unlikely-looking move is the only way to win. By walking into a pin, Black maintains his queen's influence on the back rank and threatens 36...♘g3+ 37 ♔h2 ♘xe4+ 38 ♔h1 ♘f2#.

36 ♕c6

36 ♕f3 seeks to defend by covering f2, but 36...♘g3+ (36...♕xc2 is the move to play if you absolutely insist on forcing the fastest mate) 37 ♔h2 (or 37 ♕xg3 ♕xb7+) 37...♘e2+ 38 ♔h1 ♕xg1# shows another threat. 36 ♕d4 allows 36...♕xb7+.

36...♕d1!

Defending the bishop, and renewing the threat of mate with ...♘g3+.

37 ♕f3 ♕d2! 0-1

Mate is forced. 37...♘g3+ 38 ♕xg3 ♗d5+ is another way to win.

116) The problem with 18 hxg7? is 18...♗a3!, sacrificing a rook and a piece to rip open White's king position. After 19 gxf8♕+, only one of the recaptures is good:

a) 19...♔xf8?? 20 bxa3 ♘c3 21 ♗h6+ ♔e7 22 ♘xd4 ♘xe2+ 23 ♘xe2 gives White too much for the queen.

b) 19...♘xf8? leaves e5 uncovered, which becomes critical in the line 20 ♖g1+ ♔h8?? (20...♘g6 21 ♗b4 ♕xb4 22 c4 gives Black no advantage since he has wasted a piece in comparison with the line after 19...♖xf8!) 21 bxa3 ♘c3 22 ♕e5+, and White mates.

c) 19...♖xf8! allows White no clear targets for any counterplay, and so Black's attack takes over. If you came to this conclusion, then you have solved the exercise. 20 bxa3 ♘c3! is the main idea: White can only avoid mate on b1 or b2 at a heavy cost in material. 20 ♖g1+ (20 ♗b4 ♕xb4 leads to similar play) 20...♔h8 21 ♗b4 ♕xb4 22 c4 is the most resilient, but after 22...dxc3 (22...♘c3 is also strong) 23 bxa3 ♕xa3+ 24 ♔b1 ♖c8 25 ♖c1 ♕b4+ 26 ♔a1 ♘f4! 27 ♕c2 ♕b2+ 28 ♕xb2 cxb2+ 29 ♔xb2 ♘d3+ Black regains his material with an enormous advantage.

18...♖fc8? is also playable, although Black's main threat (and saving idea after 19 h6?) remains 19...♗a3!. The game is far less clear in lines like 19 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 20 h6.

117) 29 ♗f5+!! 1-0. It is forced mate, as either capture allows the h7-rook to deliver a deadly check. 29...♔xf5 (29...gxf5 30 ♖h6+ ♔e7 31 ♕f6+ ♔e8 32 ♖h8#; 29...♔d6 30 ♖xd7#) 30 ♖f7+ ♔g5 (30...♔e6 31 ♕f6#) 31 ♕h4#. A

beautiful finish – the lines are not complex, but finding the move to set them up required some imagination.

118) 16...♕xa4! wins a clear piece thanks to a back-rank tactic and a knight fork: 17 bxa4 (17 f3 ♖xb3 18 ♕d1 ♖b2 19 ♖xb2 ♕xd1+ 20 ♔xd1 ♘f2+ is no improvement for White) 17...♖b1+ 18 ♕d1 ♖xd1+ 19 ♔xd1 ♘xf2+ 20 ♔e2 ♘xh1 21 ♔f3 ♖b8 22 ♖c1 ♖b2 and while White can recover the piece, he will be many pawns down with a lost rook ending.

However, the game actually continued **16...c5?? 17 0-0 c4 18 d3 ♘d6 19 ♖fc1 ♖fe8**, when Black was comfortable, but the game was later drawn.

119) 54 ♕h7! wins, as there is no good reply to the threat of 55 h4+ ♔g4 56 ♕g6+. It is surprising that this is the only way to win, as it decentralizes the queen – presumably Bacrot would otherwise have spotted it instantly. The key point is to prevent the king from running back to safety via h6. After 54...b1♕ (54...♕e2+ 55 ♖f2 leaves Black with no useful queen checks) 55 h4+ ♔g4 56 ♕xb1 Black's king is trapped in a mating-net, with ♕g6+ and ♖f4+ among the threats. 56...♕e6 allows 57 ♕b4+!? ♗xb4 58 ♖f4#, while 56...g5 gives White a choice of 57 ♖f4+ gxf4 58 ♕g6+ or 57 ♕c2, threatening ♕c8+ and ♕a4+.

120) After 31 g7! ♖xg7 32 ♖g1 Black has no decent defence since 32...♖f7 allows 33 ♗xf5.

121) 27 ♘xh7! (a beautiful queen sacrifice) **27...♕g4** (this parries White's threat of 28 ♕h8+! ♔xh8 29 ♘f6+ and ♖h7#, but White has additional ideas; 27...♗xf6 28 ♘xf6+ ♔g7 29 ♖h7# is a standard mating pattern with rook and knight) **28 ♕xe7! 1-0**. White is a piece up after 28...♕xh3 29 ♕xf8+ (or 29 ♘f6+!) 29...♖xf8 30 ♘f6+ ♔g7 31 gxh3.

122) Presumably Black was in desperate time-trouble, but even with some time for reflection, 37...♖f2! is a tricky move to spot. The variations are simple enough though: 38 ♖g1 (38 ♖3xf2 ♕xf2; 38 ♖1xf2 ♕xf2; 38 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7; 38 h3 ♖xf3 39 gxf3 removes any danger for Black) 38...♖xf3 39 ♘xf3 ♖xg1+ 40 ♘xg1 and Black wins comfortably with her extra pawns.

37...♖xe1? is the only other move that doesn't lose. Then 38 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 39 ♖xe1 ♕e4 40 ♖g1 ♖xg2 41 ♖xg2 ♕e1+ is perpetual check. The game ended rather sadly for Black: **37...♕xe5?? 38 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 39 ♕xd7 ♖xe1 40 ♖xh7+ ♔g5 41 ♕e7+ 1-0**. The black king will be mated.

123) 19...♗xd5! 20 ♖xd5 ♕a8 is a simple double attack, but with a sting in the tail: **21 ♖d4** (the only attempt to maintain material parity) **21...♕xa2 22 ♖xe4 c3!** (this is the deathblow; the pawn cannot be captured, but neither can it be tolerated) **23 ♖d4** (23 ♗xc3 ♕b1+! is the main point of Black's combination – the e4-rook is lost due to a further double attack) **23...cxb2 24 ♖d2 ♗a3 0-1**.

124) 21 ♘c5! exploits the pin on the d-file to sink the knight into e6. This also secures the f5-pawn and puts pressure on g7, while turning a sidelined knight into a centralized monster. After 21...♘xd5 22 ♘e6 the black queen is lost because mate is threatened on g7, while 21...dxc5 22 ♖xd8 ♖bxd8 doesn't give Black enough compensation for

the queen. Finally, 21...♕e8 22 ♘e6 ♖g8 23 ♖d3 is miserable for Black.

Instead, White preferred **21 ♖d3?**. Then 21...♕a5!? 22 b3 e4 is one possibility, with rather unclear play.

125) 21...♘g6!

This cunning retreat threatens to trap the bishop by ...h4, and White has no satisfactory reply to this idea. 21...h4? 22 ♗xf4 exf4 can be met by 23 ♕xg4 or 23 ♘3d4, neither very attractive for Black. 21...♗h6?! is a reasonable move, but poses White less in the way of immediate problems.

22 ♖e4

22 ♗d3 a6 (22...h4 23 ♕xg4 hxg3 24 hxg3 ♘f8 25 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 gives White more play) 23 ♘c3 h4 24 ♕xg4 hxg3 25 hxg3 ♘ge7 and, with a piece for two pawns, Black is on top. 22 h3 h4 23 hxg4 (23 ♕xg4 is suicide: 23...hxg3 24 ♕xg6 gxf2+) 23...hxg3 24 gxf5 gxf2+ 25 ♔xf2 ♕b6+ gives Black a decisive attack, and it is a similar story after 22 f3 whether he plays 22...♘xg3 23 hxg3 h4 or 22...h4 23 ♗f2 g3.

22...a6 (22...h4 is also effective immediately) **23 ♘c3 ♗h6 24 ♖c2 h4 25 ♖xg4 ♖g7** (this was the point behind Black's two preliminary moves) **26 ♖e4 hxg3 27 hxg3 ♕b6 28 ♘a4 ♕a7** and Black won.

126) 18 ♘xf7!

A desperado uprooting the black king. Other moves are less effective:

a) Certainly not 18 ♘xh7?? ♗f5.

b) 18 ♘xd5?? ♘xg5 shows why it is useful to give up the g5-knight before taking on d5.

c) 18 ♘cxe4? dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♗b5 is good for Black.

d) After 18 ♘gxe4?! ♗f5 Black is only a little worse (not 18...dxe4? 19 ♗xe4).

18...♔xf7 19 ♘xd5

The black knights are both targets, together with their king. **19...♘g5** (the natural 19...♘f6? is even worse: 20 ♗xf6 overloads the e7-bishop, and 20...gxf6 21 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 22 ♘f4 is a clean kill) **20 ♗b2 ♘b5** (the only answer to the threat of ♘xe7 and ♗xa3) **21 ♖ad1 ♗f8** (now White wins by a direct attack, but 21...♔g8 gives White a number of ways to exploit the pins, such as 22 ♘f4! ♘d6 {22...♗d6 23 ♘h5 ♘e6 24 a4} 23 ♕c3 ♗f6 24 ♕b3+ ♘df7 25 ♗xf6 gxf6 26 ♘h5, when Black can't preserve his d7-bishop) **22 h4 ♘e6 23 ♕xh7! ♗d6 24 ♖d3** (24 ♗f3!) **24...♖h8 25 ♖f3+ ♗f4 26 ♖xf4+ ♘xf4 27 ♕xg7+ 1-0**

127) 45...d5!

Chess principles that might have guided you to this move:

1) A successful pawn-break on a well-defended square tends to be strong;

2) A decisive pawn-break often occurs on the colour squares where the opponent lacks a bishop.

46 exd5

46 cxd5 ♕c2+ 47 ♗d2 d3+ 48 ♘xd3 (48 ♔e1 ♕b1+) 48...♕d1+ 49 ♔f2 ♕f1#. 46 ♔d3 gives Black a choice of winning lines: 46...dxe4+ 47 ♘xe4 (47 fxe4 ♘g4) 47...♗xe4+ 48 fxe4 ♕g4 or 46...dxc4+ 47 bxc4 ♗f7.

46...d3+! 47 ♘xd3 (47 ♔d2 ♘f1+) **47...♕f5** and with the queen in the attack, White was defenceless: **48 ♘b4 e4! 49 ♖f2 exf3+ 50 ♖xf3 ♕e4 51 ♕d7+ ♔h6 52 ♕e6 ♗e5 53 ♖xe3 ♕xe3+ 54 ♔f1 ♕f3+ 55 ♔g1 ♗d4+ 56 ♔h2 ♗e3 57 ♗h4 ♕e2+ 58 ♔h3 ♕f1+ 59 ♔h2 ♕g1+ 0-1**.

128) 24 ♗f5! is a clear win. 24...♘f6 25 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 26 ♕h4 and 24...♘b8 25 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 26 ♕g3 both leave White

an exchange up with a great position, leaving two moves to consider:

a) 24...♖fd8 25 ♗xd7 ♖xc4 26 ♗e6! (Black's idea is shown by 26 ♗a1? ♖c2 27 ♖f2 ♖xf2 28 ♔xf2 ♗c6) 26...♖xc3 (26...♖xd1 27 ♗xc4) 27 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 28 ♕g3 with a decisive attack.

b) 24...gxf5 25 ♖xf5 f6 (25...♖fd8 26 ♖xh5 ♕f6 27 ♖xd7; 25...♘f6 26 ♖g5+ ♔h7 27 ♖xe5; 25...♖xc4 26 ♖xd7) 26 ♖xh5 and Black cannot meet both threats: 27 ♖xd7 and 27 ♖h8+ ♔f7 28 ♖h7+.

After **24 ♕g3?!**, as White played in the game, 24...♖c7! gives Black some chances of organizing a defence.

129) 37...♕xf4!

This is a forced draw, as the white king lacks protection – I hope you spotted this feature of the position, rather than seeking a draw in a miserable ending. Note that this isn't a random factor – pursuing an initiative often requires the commitment of all the pieces and some pawns (note the moves f4 and h4), and a countersacrifice may be the only way the defender can exploit the weaknesses created. The only other idea is 37...b5?!, but 38 ♘xd6 bxc4 39 ♖xd4 ♖ad7 will leave Black defending a difficult pawn-down rook ending. 37...♕e7? 38 ♘xd8 ♘e2+ might be worth a try in a blitz game, but assuming White avoids mate on the h-file, he can win easily enough: 39 ♔f2 (simplest, though 39 ♔f1 ♘g3+ 40 ♔f2! ♕xh4 41 ♖c2! also wins) 39...♘xc1 40 ♕xc1, etc.

38 ♘xd8

38 ♖f1? loses to 38...♕e3+ 39 ♔h1 (39 ♖f2 ♘e2+) 39...b5.

38...♘f3+! 39 gxf3

39 ♔f2 ♘d4+ 40 ♔g1 repeats (not 40 ♔e1?? ♖e7+).

39...♕g3+ 40 ♔f1 ♕xf3+ 41 ♔e1 ♕e3+ 42 ♔f1

The attempt to run by 42 ♕e2 ♕g1+ 43 ♔d2 (43 ♕f1 ♕e3+ is a repetition) 43...♕d4+ 44 ♕d3 is most clinically parried by 44...♖xa2+ (44...♕f2+ 45 ♔c3 ♖a3+ 46 ♔b4 ♖xd3 47 ♖c7+ ♔g8 48 ♖xd3 ♕b2+ should also lead to a draw) 45 ♖c2 ♕f4+ 46 ♔e2 ♕g4+ 47 ♔e3 ♕g3+ 48 ♔d4 ♕d6+, when White must allow a repetition (otherwise he is mated!).

42...♕f3+ 43 ♔e1 ♕e3+ 44 ♔f1 ½-½

130) 26 g4!

The idea is to force the black bishop off the b1-h7 diagonal without loss of time. 26 g3 is quite good, but Black can fight on by meeting gxf4 with ...g4.

26...♗c8

Now White simply walks into Black's kingside via the abandoned light squares. The main point is 26...fxg3 27 ♖xf5! ♖xf5 28 ♕d3 ♖f8 29 ♖f1 ♕g6 30 ♖xf5 (30 ♘xg6?? ♖xf1+ 31 ♔g2 ♖8f2+ 32 ♔h3 gxh2) 30...♕xf5 (30...♖xf5 31 ♘xg6) 31 ♕xf5+ ♖xf5 32 ♗c2 ♗xe5 33 ♗xf5+ ♔g7 34 dxe5 and White has an extra piece.

27 ♕d3+ ♔g7 28 ♗c2 ♖h8 29 ♘g6!? (29 ♕g6+ ♕xg6 30 ♘xg6 is also good enough) **29...♗xg4** (29...♗e6 30 ♔g1!? {threatening ♘xf4} 30...♗f7 31 ♖e7 is untenable for Black) **30 ♖e7+ ♔f6 31 ♖xc7 ♖hg8 32 ♘e5 1-0**

131) 22...♘xh4! 23 ♕xh4 (after 23 gxh4 ♖g7 White suffers a disaster on the g- and h-files) 23...♖f4! and Black wins since 24 gxf4 is met by 24...♘f3+. Black missed his chance by **22...♖g7?**, which allowed White a comfortable advantage.

132) 19...♖xd5! 20 ♗xf6

20 exd5? hxg5 gives Black two good pieces for a rook.

20...♘xf3+!

A neat *zwischenzug*, enabling Black to remove his rook from its *en prise* location with gain of time, while also picking off a precious pawn. 20...♘e2+?! has similar ideas, but without capturing a pawn. 20...♗xf6? 21 exd5 or 20...♕xf6? 21 exd5 gives Black reasonable compensation for the exchange, but that is all.

21 ♕xf3 (21 gxf3 ♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 ♕xf6 is a similar story: White's e-pawn has been reinforced, but his structure is weak overall, and Black should win the ending) **21...♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 ♗xf6 23 b3 ♗d4+ 24 ♔h1 ♖e8** and, with an extra pawn and the better structure, Black went on to win.

133) Kraai – Stripunsky
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010

Black wins a piece: **22...♖xc4!** (Black must take with the rook on c4 to set up the knight fork; 22...♗xc4? 23 ♖xc4 ♘b6 doesn't work because of both 24 ♖xc8+ and 24 ♕xa6) **23 ♖xc4 ♘b6 24 ♕xb5** (after 24 ♕xa6 ♗xc4 Black's pieces are neatly defended) **24...axb5 25 ♖c5 ♘g4** and Black won without difficulty.

134) Runić – Bosnjak
Sarajevo 2010

10 ♘b5!

The pin on the e7-knight may only be a fleeting affair, but this is all the time it takes for White to sink his knight into d6. Black has no viable reply.

10...♕b6

10...hxg5 11 ♘d6# is the main point, while 10...♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♕xd1 12 ♖fxd1 solves nothing from Black's viewpoint, as 12...hxg5 13 ♘c7# is still checkmate.

11 ♘d6+ ♔d8 12 dxc5 ♕xb2 13 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7

White is spoilt for choice here. He chose an elegant method, rather than just grabbing material: **14 ♘xf5 exf5 15 ♖b1 1-0**. After 15...♕xa2 16 ♖xb7 White forces mate.

135) Afek – Ma. Tseitlin
Israeli Team Ch 2010

34 ♖f1!

The simple threat of ♕f7+ is hard to parry due to the poor positioning of the black rooks.

34...♕f4 35 ♕g2!

The black queen is trapped.

136) Liang Chong – Yu Lie
Hefei (rapid) 2010

Black's attack against h2 means that he can win simply by advancing his e-pawn: 15...e5! 16 ♘f5 (other knight moves are met in the same way: 16 ♘b3 e4 17 ♘fd4 ♕xh2+ 18 ♔f1 ♘e5 and ...♗g4 is an idea) 16...e4 17 ♘3d4 ♕xh2+ 18 ♔f1 ♘b6 and further material losses for White are not far off.

The game, alas, took a different path: **15...b6? 16 ♗b3 ♗b7 17 ♕xc7 ♗xc7** and was later drawn.

137) Jakovljević – N. Kosintseva
Sarajevo 2010

The 'hand reaches' to exchange rooks but this allows perpetual check – and that is how the game ended. The win was there for the taking by 36 ♔h2! ♖xa1 (anything else is hopeless) 37 ♕g4!, when Black is unable to defend against the mate threats; e.g., 37...♖h1+ 38 ♔xh1 ♕e1+ 39 ♔h2 ♗f7 40 ♖b8+ ♗e8 41 d5 is completely hopeless for Black.

138) Janković – Mazi
Sarajevo 2010

23 ♘c4! (the surprising point is that the main target is the black queen!)

23...♖xc4 (this offers little hope, but after 23...♕b4 24 ♗d2! the black queen is trapped) **24 ♗xc4 ♗d6 25 ♕h4! ♘df6** (Black reluctantly acknowledges that 25...gxh6 26 ♕xh6 ♘ef6 loses to 27 ♖e5! or simply 27 ♗xd5) **26 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 27 ♕h6+ ♔h8 28 ♗d3** and White's attack was unstoppable.

139) Rechlis – Sutovsky
Israeli Team Ch 2010

28...♘f4!

Other moves are too slow, given that White has the simple idea of advancing his a-pawn.

29 ♕xf3

White is mated after both 29 ♕d6 ♕h3 and 29 ♕b3 ♗xe4 30 ♖xe4 ♘h3+ 31 ♔f1 ♘xf2 32 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+, while in the case of 29 gxf4 ♕g4+ 30 ♘g3 ♗xd3 31 ♖xd3 gxf4 there isn't much left of White's position. And 29 ♕e3 ♗xe4 30 ♕xe4 ♘h3+ 31 ♔f1 ♘xf2 32 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 33 ♔e3 f2 34 ♖f1 ♕xg3+ 35 ♔e2 ♕xa3 leaves Black with an extra piece.

29...♘h3+ 30 ♔f1 (30 ♔g2 g4!? 31 ♕d3 ♗xe4+ 32 ♖xe4 ♘xf2 is hopeless for White) **30...♗xe4 31 ♕xf8+ ♗xf8 32 ♖xe4 ♕d1+ 0-1**

140) Yu Yangyi – Hou Yifan
Shenzhen 2011

Black has an instant win at her disposal: 37...♖xe4+! 38 dxe4 (White also loses after 38 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 39 ♕a2+ ♔h7 40 dxe4 ♖d8+ or 38 ♔xd5 ♖xf4 39 ♕xf4 ♕xd3+ 40 ♕d4 ♖d8+) 38...♗b3! leaves White defenceless.

Other moves may keep some advantage, but at the very least jeopardize the victory. After 37...♗xe4? 38 ♔xe5 ♗xf5 39 ♖a3 g5 40 ♖xf5 ♕xf5+ 41 ♔d4 the white king proves a difficult prey. The game continued **37...♖exf5?** (37...♖fxf5? 38 ♕e3 ♕g2 39 ♔c3 gives Black nothing) **38 ♖xf5 ♕xf5 39 ♖e1 ♗f7 40 ♖g1** (40 ♔e3 may be preferable) **40...♖d8+ 41 ♔e3 ♕e5?** (after the correct 41...♗c4, 42 ♖xg7+ keeps White in the game, though 42...♔f8 43 ♖g3 ♖xd3+ 44 ♕xd3 ♗xd3 45 ♔xd3 is a tricky ending to hold) **42 ♕c3 ♕xc3 43 ♘xc3** and, with his king now well-placed, White even went on to win the endgame!

141) Gorovykh – V. Popov
St Petersburg Ch 2010

38 ♕f2! is the correct course – the bishop doesn't need to be defended! After 38...♕xe2 (otherwise White has ideas like ♘xg7 and ♗xg4) 39 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 40 ♖b1 Black cannot save the b3-bishop without allowing ♖b7 and a disaster on g7, and therefore White will be a pawn up with a very strong position.

The game continued **38 ♔f2?** (passively defending the attacked bishop on e2) **38...♗f6!?** (after 38...♘f8, heading for e6, the game is unclear) **39 h3?** (39 ♔g1! keeps White alive), after which 39...♗g5! would have greatly favoured Black, the main idea being 40 hxg4 ♘h4!! 41 gxh4 ♗d2, trapping White's queen.

142) Vachier-Lagrave – Tirard
French Team Ch 2010

The main task here was to see past the fact that Black has just landed a tactical blow, and spot that it is Black's king and back rank which are vulnerable. The variations are not complex.

26 ♖xc2 ♕d1+ 27 ♔h2! 1-0. Both recaptures fail because of the same idea: 27...♖xc2 28 ♖d8+ ♔h7 29 ♕f5+ g6 30 ♕xf7# and 27...♕xc2 28 ♖d8+ ♔h7 (28...♖xd8 29 ♕xc2 is obviously hopeless for Black) 29 ♕f5+ g6 30 ♕xf7#.

143) Baginskaite – Krush
USA Women's Ch, Saint Louis 2011

25...♖xc3! 26 ♖xc3 (26 axb4 ♖xc2 27 ♘xc2 ♘xb4) 26...♗xa3 and with all three of White's major pieces lined up on the e1-a5 diagonal, the bishop will return to b4 next move to win back the exchange.

Black went badly wrong in the game: after **25...♗xa3? 26 ♗xa5 ♗b4?** (instead 26...♕d6 is preferable), White could have won by 27 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 28 ♕xb4!, since she crashes through on e6 after either 28...♘xb4 29 ♗xb6 ♘xb6 30 ♘xe6 or 28...♕xb4 29 ♗xb4 ♘xb4 30 ♘xe6.

144) B. Socko – Zhigalko
Lublin 2011

34...♘e2+!

34...♖xg3+?? 35 fxg3 leaves Black struggling to survive, as the double checks achieve nothing. 34...♕d6? may keep some of Black's advantage, but only due to his extra pawns, and it totally surrenders the initiative.

35 ♔h1

The most critical point is 35 ♕xe2 ♖xg3+ 36 ♔h2 ♖g5! (it is important to cover h5, as 36...♖g7? 37 ♕h5! shows) followed by ...♖h8+. Black has a won ending after 35 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 36 ♔f3 (only move) 36...♘xd3 37 ♖xb6 ♖xe4! 38 ♔xe4 ♗xb6.

35...♖h8+ 36 ♗h2 (36 ♔g2 is again answered by 36...♘f4+) **36...♖gh4!** (36...♖xh2+ 37 ♔xh2 ♖h4+ 38 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 39 ♔g1 ♕e6 also wins) **37 ♕xe2 ♖xh2+ 38 ♔g1 ♕e6 39 ♗f3 f5 40 ♖fc1 ♕g6+ 41 ♗g4 ♖h1+ 42 ♔g2 ♖8h2+ 43 ♔g3 f4+ 0-1**. 44 ♔f3 ♕c6+ 45 ♕e4 ♖xf2#.

145) Le Quang – Bruzon
Havana 2011

46 ♘g1!

White plays for mate by bringing the knight to g5. Other moves are inadequate in view of Black's threat of ...♖e4 and ...♘xe5+ – a threat that the knight retreat also happens to take care of!

46...♖e4?!

The only way to play on is 46...♘d4 47 ♘h3 ♘f3 48 ♘g5+ ♘xg5 49 ♔xg5, but the continuing mate threats leave Black paralysed; e.g., 49...♖e4 50 ♗f7 b3 (50...♖d4 51 ♖e8 ♖d7 52 g4 and f5) 51 ♖b8! (51 ♖e8? b2 52 ♖xe7? ♖xe5+! 53 ♖xe5 b1♕ defends g6) 51...♖b4 (51...c4 52 ♖b7) 52 ♖xb4 cxb4 53 ♗xb3 with a won minor-piece ending for White.

47 ♘f3 1-0

♘g5+ and ♖h8# will follow.

146) Liashenko – Odnorozhenko
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

By 13...♕f5! Black wins a piece: 14 ♗e3 (14 g3 h6) 14...h6 15 g4 (15 ♘gxe4 ♗xe4 16 g4 ♕d5 17 c4 ♕e6 18 d5 ♕e5 also leaves Black well on top) 15...♕d5! 16 ♘gxe4 (16 ♕xd5 ♗xd5 17 c4 ♗b7 is not significantly different) 16...f5 17 gxf5 gxf5 18 ♘g3 f4. Black's actual choice, **13...e3? 14 ♕xd5 exf2+**, gave him little.

147) Martinović – Sutković
Sarajevo 2010

42 ♗e3!

Black is gearing up for a ...♗xb3 sacrifice, as shown by the line 42 ♗d8? ♗xb3! 43 ♕g2+ ♔f7 44 axb3 ♕xb3+ 45 ♔a1 ♗c1 46 ♘e1 ♕c3+ 47 ♔a2 ♕xe1, when only Black can be better. 42 bxa4?? loses to 42...♕xb6+ 43 ♔a1 ♕g1+ 44 ♔b2 ♗d2!, while 42 ♕g2+ ♔f7 43 ♗e3 (43 bxa4? ♕xb6+ 44 ♔a1 ♗c1) 43...f4 blocks up the position, whereupon it will not be easy for White to make progress.

42...♗xe3

42...f4 now loses to 43 ♕e6+ ♔g7 44 ♘d4!, and 42...♗xb3 43 ♗xh6 is hopeless for Black.

43 ♘xe3 ♗xb3

43...f4 is again hopeless, one line being 44 ♘f5 ♗xb3 45 ♘xd6 ♗c2++ 46 ♔xc2 ♕c7+ 47 ♔d3 ♕xd6 48 ♕e6+, forcing a won pawn ending.

Throwing in the exchange on e3 before sacrificing on b3 has opened White's second rank, which he puts to good use:

44 ♕g2+! ♔f8 45 ♕b2 1-0

Black loses a piece.

148) Ramnath – Saranya

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

18 ♕e7! ♔g8 (now the king has been decoyed to a square that allows a knight fork on e7, but 18...♖g8 is even worse, as 19 ♕xf7 ♖b7 {19...exd5 20 ♗xd5} 20 ♘e7 shows) **19 ♕xe6! ♕c5** (avoiding the fork, but hopeless; 19...♗xe6 and 19...fxe6 are both met by 20 ♘e7+) **20 ♕e7** with a clear extra pawn and a dominant position thanks to Black's wrecked structure.

149) Padmini – Yuldachev

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Although based on simple tactics, a move like **29...♘h5!**, springing from a cramped-looking position, can be hard to see. After **30 ♘xh5** (30 ♗xf8 ♘xg3 31 ♖f3 ♘xe4 is hopeless for White, as is 30 fxe5 ♘xg3 31 exf6 ♕b6+) **30...♗xh6 31 ♘g3 ♗xf4 32 ♖xf4 exf4 33 ♘e2 ♕e7** Black had a large material advantage for no real compensation.

150) Demidenko – Roshchupkin

Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

29...♗xb2! gives Black a decisive attack: 30 cxb6 ♗xe5+ 31 ♔c1 ♗xf4+ 32 ♔d1 ♕b1+ 33 ♔e2 ♕xc2+ 34 ♔f1 (34 ♔f3 ♕e4+) 34...♕c4+ 35 ♔f2 (35 ♔g2 ♖g8) 35...♗d6 and ...♗c5+.

Slower moves fail, such as the game continuation **29...♖b5? 30 ♗xe6! ♗xb2** (30...♔d8 31 ♗d7! ♖xc5 32 ♗c8!) **31 ♗d7+ ♔f8 32 ♗xb5 ♗c3+ 33 ♔c1 1-0**.

151) Gutman – Erben

Stuttgart 2010

24 ♖d7! (White weaves a mating-net) **24...f5** (24...f6 25 ♘c7 is no different) **25 ♘c7! 1-0**. There's no way out; e.g., 25...fxg4 26 ♖f7#, 25...♖g6 26 ♖a5 or 25...e3 26 ♖a4+.

152) Turzo – Tran Tranh Tu

Budapest 2010

26...♕a4!

This natural attacking move turns out to have no acceptable reply. The d4-knight is attacked, and there is no sound way to support it. And if it moves, then the e3-knight is the target.

27 ♘f3

After 27 ♘b3 ♘xb3+ 28 cxb3 ♕e4 White's weak back rank means he simply loses the pinned knight given mating lines like 29 ♖e1 ♗xe3 30 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 31 ♕xe3 ♕xe3 32 ♖xe3 ♖c1# and 29 ♖c3 ♗xe3 30 ♕xe3 ♕xe3 31 ♖xe3 ♖c1+ 32 ♖xc1 ♖xc1#. 27 c3 ♗xd4 28 ♖xd4 allows 28...♘b3+ or 28...♕xd4. 27 b3 is no good because 27...♗xd4+ comes with check. And 27 ♕d3 fails to 27...♗xd4 28 ♕xd4 ♘b3+! 29 cxb3 ♖xc1+ 30 ♖xc1 ♖xc1#.

27...♕e4 28 ♖e1 (after 28 ♖d3 ♗xe3 29 ♖xe3 ♖xc2 30 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 31 ♕e1 ♕b4 32 ♕b1 ♖xg2 White has saved his piece, but loses many of his pawns, still with a rotten king position) **28...♗xe3 29 ♘g5 ♕xf4 30 ♕xe3 ♕xe3 31 ♖xe3 ♖xc2 32 ♖xc2 ♖xc2** and Black comfortably won the endgame.

153) Ter-Sahakian – Linchevsky
Kirishi (juniors) 2010

34...♖xc1!

34...♕e2? 35 ♖xe2 ♖xc1+ 36 ♕g1 ♘g3+ 37 ♔h2 ♖xg1 38 ♔xg3! is very good for White.

35 ♖xc1 ♕g5

A nice double attack, the threats being ...♕xc1+ and ...♘g3+ followed by ...♕e3/c5#: **36 ♕g1** (rook moves are no help either; e.g., 36 ♖c2 ♘g3+ 37 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 38 ♖f2 ♕e1+ 39 ♖f1 ♕xf1#, while 36 f4 allows 36...♘g3+ 37 ♔g1 ♕c5#) **36...♘g3+ 37 ♔h2 ♘e2** (a knight fork is the icing on the cake) **38 ♕f1 ♕f4+!** (avoiding 38...♘xc1?? 39 f4! and 38...♕xc1?? 39 ♕xe2) **0-1**. After 39 g3 (39 ♔h1 ♘g3+) 39...♕xg3+ 40 ♔h1 ♘xc1 41 ♕xc1 ♕xh3+ 42 ♔g1 ♕g3+ 43 ♔h1 ♕xf3+ White has a hopeless queen ending.

154) Hector – Hillarp Persson
Malmö 2010

29 ♘g4!

The only winning move, based on an overload of the f6-knight, a pin on the e-file and the weakness of Black's back rank. 29 ♘d5?? ♕xd5, 29 ♘f5? ♕xf3 and 29 ♘c4? ♕xc4 are no good for White.

29...♘xg4

29...♕xf3 30 ♘xf6+ (the fact that the defending piece is taken with check is critical) 30...gxf6 31 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 32 gxf3 leaves White with an extra rook. 29...♕xg4 loses because 30 ♖xe8+ deflects the queen's defender: 30...♘xe8 31 ♕xg4.

30 ♕xg4!

30 ♖xe4?! ♖xe4 31 h3! ♖d3 32 ♕f5! g6 33 ♕f1 is also good enough to win, but the move played is much neater.

1-0

In view of the lines 30...f5 31 ♖xe4 and 30...♕xg4 31 ♖xe8#.

155) Haub – Kazhgaleev
Fourmies 2010

22...♘h4+! 23 ♔g1

23 gxh4 ♘e3+! 24 ♗xe3 (24 ♔h2 ♕g4) 24...♕g4+ 25 ♔h2 ♕xh4+ 26 ♔g2 ♕g4+ 27 ♔h2 ♖f5 and ...♖h5# follows.

23...♘e3!

23...♕f5 is also good, but less forcing.

0-1

Black is threatening ...♕h3, so White cannot take the knight. After 24 ♘d1 (24 ♗xe3 ♕h3 25 gxh4 ♕g4+ is the same as the note to White's 23rd move) 24...♘xf1 (24...♕h3?? 25 ♘xe3 ♖f3 is just a draw) 25 ♔xf1 (25 ♕e1 ♘xg3 26 fxg3 e4 with a material plus and a decisive attack) 25...♕h3+ 26 ♔e1 ♘f5 Black is the exchange up with a very active position, so it is not surprising that White decided to resign.

156) Li Chao – Wang Hao
Danzhou 2011

29...♘e3!! is a strong and surprising blow (and somewhat reminiscent of the celebrated move 26...♖e3! from Réti-Alekhine, Baden-Baden 1925). Then:

a) 30 ♖c3 and 30 ♗xc7 both lose to 30...♕h3.

b) 30 fxe3 fxg3 31 hxg3 (31 ♕b3 ♕f5; 31 ♔g2 ♖h4) 31...♗xg3 and Black wins.

c) 30 ♕xe4 is relatively best for White, but 30...dxe4 31 fxe3 fxg3 32 ♔g2 axb5 leaves Black much better: 33 ♖ec1 (33 h3 ♕f7 34 ♖f1 ♕b3 penetrates) 33...♕g4 34 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 35 ♖xc7 ♕xe2+ 36 ♔xg3 ♕xe3+, etc.

29...fxg3?! 30 hxg3 ♘e3 is less effective in view of 31 ♗xc7! (31 ♖c3 is also possible) 31...♗xc7 32 ♖xc7 ♕h3 (32...♕xc7 33 bxa6) 33 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 34 b6!. 29...♖e3? fails because of 30 fxe3 fxg3 31 e4 (or 31 ♔g2) 31...♕h3 32 e3.

After **29...axb5? 30 ♕f3 ♖xd4 31 gxf4 ♖e4 32 e3 ♗xf4 33 ♖d1 ♗d6**, the game was later drawn.

Chapter 5

157) 30...e5! gives Black at least sufficient play, though the game remains quite messy: 31 ♖xe5 (31 fxe5 fxg4 32 ♖f2 ♖h8!? intending ...♘f5) 31...♖xe5 32 ♖xe5 (32 dxe5 fxg4 33 e6 ♕c7! with good counterplay) 32...fxg4 33 ♕e1 g3+ secures the knight an excellent square on f5.

As we have noted, seeking unrealistic clarity is a common cause of error. Probably wanting to reduce White's counter-resources, Black went fatally astray in the game. **30...fxg4? 31 hxg4 e5??** is the wrong move-order for a specific tactical reason: **32 ♕xh6+! ♔xh6 33 ♖h3+ 1-0**. After 34 ♖xh7+ and 35 ♖xd7, White will be a knight up.

158) 22...♘d4! throws a spanner into the works. After 23 ♕f2 (not 23 ♕a2? ♖xd6 24 e5 ♕f5 25 exd6 ♕e4, with a decisive counterattack against the white king) Black neatly parries the multiple threats by 23...♘b5!, exploiting the newly created d-file pin. After 24 e5 (24 ♘xb5? ♖xd1) 24...♕g7 25 fxg5 ♘xd6 26 ♖xd6 c3 White has clearly lost his grip on the position, while Black's c-pawn and strong bishop are major plus points.

In the game, **22...♖c7?! 23 e5 ♕e7 24 ♘f3 gxf4 25 gxf4** left White firmly in the driving seat. After **25...f6?** he could have won a pawn by 26 ♘xb7 ♖xb7 27 ♕xc4.

159) 28...♖d4!!

A beautiful move, opening the way to g5 for the black queen, blocking the white queen's diagonal to a7 and defending the f4-knight for a vital instant. And in turn, the knight defends the rook! Other moves are bad: 28...♖d1+?? 29 ♘xd1 ♕g5+ 30 ♕g3 and because the knight is pinned, 30...♘e2+ is illegal. 28...♖g5+? 29 ♔f1 (29 ♔h1?? ♖xh2+!) 29...♖g1+ 30 ♔xg1 ♕g5+ 31 ♕g3 is a similar story. 28...♖g8+? 29 ♔h1! (29 ♔f1?! ♖d4 is less clear) is hopeless for Black, as 29...♕b7 30 ♕xf4+ e5 31 ♕e4 shows.

29 ♖xd4!

The other way to take the knight loses, and slower moves leave White in trouble, as Black has powerful threats of ...♖h3 and ...♕d5: 29 ♕xd4?? ♘e2+ (not 29...♕g5+?? 30 ♔f1); 29 ♕g3? ♕e5 breaks the pin on the knight, threatening ...♘e2+; 29 ♖e1? ♖h3 30 ♕e5+ ♕xe5 31 ♖xe5 ♖xc4 32 ♘xc4 ♖xb3 is also an unpleasant ending for White; after 29 ♖xa7? ♕h5 Black mates well ahead of White; 29 ♖a4? ♕d5! 30 ♖cxb4+ ♔a8 and Black wins. 29 ♕f3? leaves White struggling to survive after 29...♕f5 30 ♔f1 (not 30 ♖xd4? ♘h3+) 30...♖xc4 31 ♘xc4 ♖xh2 32 ♖d1 (preventing ...♕d3+) 32...♕h3+ 33 ♕xh3 ♖xh3 or 29...♕e5 30 ♖xd4 (30 ♔f1? ♖xh2) 30...♘e2+ 31 ♔f1 ♘xd4 32 ♕g4 ♕d5.

29...♘e2+ 30 ♔h1 ♘xd4 31 ♕xd4 ♕c6+ 32 ♔g1 ♖g8+ 33 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 34 ♔e2 ♕xa1 35 ♕d6+ ½-½

The forcing sequence has ended, and White must give perpetual check.

160) Finding a resilient defence can gain half a point that is worth just as much as the extra half-point gained by a knockout tactic. There is no reason for Black to lose this position, yet a GM did precisely that. White's threats are 33 ♖xe8! ♖xe8 34 f7+ and 33 ♕g4+ ♔h8 34 ♖e7!.

32...♔h8! neatly parries the threats, and gives White little choice but to liquidate: 33 ♖xe8 (33 ♕g4 ♕f7 34 ♕h4 ♕h5! 35 ♖xe8 ♕xh4 36 ♖xf8+ ♔h7 37 ♖h8+ ♔xh8 38 f7 ♕d4+ and here it is Black who gives perpetual check) 33...♖xe8 34 f7 ♖f8 35 ♕e6, when after 35...♔h7 there is nothing better than giving perpetual check with the queen.

Other moves lose: 32...♗f7?? fails to address the 33 ♕g4+ threat. 32...♕d7? allows 33 f7+! ♕xf7 (33...♖xf7 34 ♕g6+ leads to mate) 34 ♕g4+ ♕g7 35 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 36 ♖xe8+, when the overload on the king decides matters. 32...♘xf6? 33 ♖e6 leaves Black unable to save his pinned knight. The exchange-up ending may not be so easy for White to win, but there's no need to give him the chance. The game ended **32...♕f7? 33 ♖g3+** (now this square is available to the white rook – this was the fatal drawback of moving the queen from c7) **33...♔h8 34 ♖g7 ♕xg7 35 fxg7+ ♔xg7 36 ♕e5+ ♔g6 37 ♕b8 ♘f6 38 ♖e7 1-0**.

161) 24...♖ae8! has the key point that 25 g5 is met by 25...♖e3! (not 25...♖e4? 26 ♕g3) 26 fxe3 (26 ♕c2? ♖3e4 27 ♕d1 ♕b4 leaves White struggling to draw) 26...♕g3+ with perpetual check. It can often seem that defending a difficult position will be a never-ending ordeal, but sometimes it requires just one good idea and everything falls into place. Let's also note that 25 ♗a3 c5 gets White nowhere.

Other moves are less than satisfactory: 24...♖e4?! is a move in the right spirit, but after 25 ♕f3 Black has no satisfactory follow-up: 25...♕b4 (not 25...♖xg4+?? 26 ♕xg4) 26 ♔h2 ♕xb2 (26...♔g8 27 ♗xf6 gxf6 28 ♖xf6 ♕e7 29 ♖c1 with strong threats) 27 ♕xe4 ♖e8 28 ♕c4 leaves White in charge. 24...♔g8? loses to 25 ♖d1 ♕c6 26 ♗xf6 gxf6 27 ♖xf6 ♖ae8 28 ♖e1. In the game, Black saved the knight by **24...♔e8?** but the king was doomed in the centre: **25 ♖d1 ♕e7 26 g5 hxg5 27 hxg5 ♘h7?!** (27...♖e1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 29 ♔h2 ♔d7 30 ♕h3 ♘g4+ 31 ♕xg4 ♖h8+ enables Black to reach an ending, albeit a lost one) **28 ♗a3 ♖e1+ 29 ♔h2 ♕e6 30 ♖xe1 1-0**.

162) 28...♕e5!

Black prepares ...e3 by preventing ♗d5 in reply, and makes ...♗xg3 a strong follow-up idea. 28...e3? 29 ♗d5! is by no means clear; e.g., 29...d3 30 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 31 ♗xa8. Not 28...d3? 29 ♖e3!.

29 ♘d2

The most critical line is 29 ♗xf7 e3 30 f3 ♗xg3! (30...♖xh2! is also good), when we see a key reason for putting the queen on e5. A vital point is 31 hxg3 ♖xg3 32 ♕xg3 (32 ♘d2 ♖hh3 is hopeless for White) 32...♕xg3+ 33 ♖g2 ♗xf3!!, with a beautiful mate after 34 ♖xg3 ♖h1# and a no less stunning promotion theme in the case of 34 ♖xf3 e2!. White's counterthreat against g8 makes these lines especially attractive. After 31 ♗xg8 ♗xh2+ 32 ♕xh2 (32 ♔h1 d3) 32...♖xh2 33 ♖xh2 ♔xg8 Black will win thanks to his mighty passed-pawn duo.

29...♗xd2 30 ♗xf7 e3 31 f3 (White has avoided the ...♗xg3 idea, but it has cost him a piece) **31...d3 32 ♖xd2 e2! 33 ♗xg8 ♕e3+ 34 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 35 ♔xf2 ♖xh2+ 0-1**

163) 23 g5! is a clear win, as Black simply doesn't have time for any meaningful counterblows:-

a) 23...♘a4 24 ♖xa4 ♖xd6 25 gxf6 ♖xf6 26 ♕g4 ♕xf2 27 ♖f4 leaves White a piece up.

b) 23...♘d5 24 gxh6! with a decisive attack: 24...♖xd6 (24...♘a4 25 ♘c4) 25 hxg7 ♖fd8 26 ♘g5 ♘f6 27 ♘xf7!.

c) 23...♖xd6 24 ♖xd6 ♘a4 25 b3 gives White a matèrial advantage and a strong attack.

d) 23...♘e6 24 gxf6 ♘xd4 25 ♕g4 forces mate.

e) 23...♘xh5 24 gxh6 g6 25 ♖g1 ♘a4 26 b3 with way too many threats for White.

f) 23...hxg5 24 h6! and Black's defences collapse; e.g., 24...♘a4 25 b3 ♘c3+ 26 ♔b2 ♘cd5 27 ♕xg5 g6 28 ♖xd5 ♘xd5 29 ♘xf7!.

The game continuation showed why the other option is wrong: **23 ♖e7? ♘a4!** (this must have come as a shock to White, as it turns out that taking on b7 doesn't work well at all; 23...♖xd6! 24 ♖xd6 ♘a4 25 b3 {not 25 ♕e5? ♘e4!} comes to the same thing) **24 b3** (24 ♖xb7? ♕a6! {threatening both ...♕f1+ and ...♖xd6} 25 ♕d3 ♕xd3 26 cxd3 ♘c5 and ...♘e6) **24...♖xd6 25 ♖xd6 ♕b4 26 ♕e5 ♘c3+ 27 ♔b2** (27 ♔c1?? ♕a3+ 28 ♔d2 ♘ce4+) **27...♘a4+** (neither side has a good way to avoid the draw; 27...♘xg4?! 28 ♕d4) **28 ♔b1 ♘c3+ 29 ♔b2 ♘a4+ 30 ♔b1 ½-½.**

164) 34...♗g7! is correct, as the threat of ...e4+ must be respected, while the attack on the white queen also gains time. 35 ♖xg5?? loses simply to 35...♖xa8, while 35 ♕xh8? is an unsuccessful desperado in view of 35...♗xh8 36 ♖xg5 e4+ (36...hxg5? 37 ♘e4) 37 ♔a2 ♖b2+ 38 ♔a1 hxg5. That leaves 35 ♕a5 as the only move. 35...e4+ 36 c3 (36 ♔a2? ♖b2+ 37 ♔a1 ♖xc2+ 38 ♔b1 ♖b8+ and Black mates) 36...♖a8! (overloading the queen) and now:

a) 37 ♕xa8? ♗xc3+ 38 ♔a2 ♖b2+ 39 ♔a1 ♖d2+ 40 ♔b1 ♖xd1+ and Black mates.

b) 37 ♖xe4+?! ♔f7 38 hxg6+ ♕xg6 39 ♖f4+ ♔g8 40 ♕xa8+ ♔h7 leaves White struggling to survive, despite his enormous material advantage: 41 ♘e4 (only move) 41...♕xg2 42 ♖b1 (again forced) 42...♖xb1+ 43 ♔xb1 ♕g1+ 44 ♔b2 ♕h2+ and ...♕xf4.

c) 37 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 38 ♖xg5 ♖xa3+ 39 ♔b1 hxg5 and Black will have the better of an ending that is likely to be drawn.

Other moves are poor. 34...♕xg4?! 35 fxg4 ♗g7 36 ♕xh8 ♗xh8 37 ♖b1 favours White, while in the game, the passive **34...♕f6?** allowed White to smash through unopposed: **35 ♖xg6! ♕xf3** (35...♗g7 36 ♘f5+!) **36 ♖e6+ ♔f7 37 ♕e8+ ♔g8 38 ♖g6+ 1-0**.

165) 13...♘xh4! is a nice sacrifice, which works very well despite the fact that only a few black units are ready to come to the queen's assistance. It turns out that after 14 gxh4? ♕xh4 the white pieces are even worse placed to defend their king, and Black wins easily: 15 ♗f4 (15 ♘d2 ♗h6; 15 ♘f4 ♗e4 16 f3 g3) 15...♗e4 16 ♗h2 ♖g8 17 ♘e1 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 g3. The only reason this isn't a clear-cut win for Black is that White can muddy the waters by **14 ♘dc5**. After **14...♘xc5 15 ♘xc5 ♗f8!** White still cannot take on h4, and so his knight must venture into unsafe territory by **16 ♘xb7** (16 gxh4? ♕xh4 17 ♗f4 ♗xc5 18 ♗g3 ♕h3 19 dxc5 ♗e4 and mate is forced) **16...♕b8 17 ♘a5** (17 gxh4 ♕xb7 is also unpleasant for White, as his kingside is wide open) **17...♘f3+ 18 ♗xf3 gxf3 19 ♕xf3 ♕b6**, when we can assess Black's game as very pleasant. He has targets on c2 and d4, with a renewed attack on the kingside still very much a possibility. After **20 ♕c3 h4!** he went on to win by combining themes on both

sides of the board. One line worth noting is 21 ♕xc6+ ♕xc6 22 ♘xc6 ♔d7 23 ♘a5 ♗b4 24 ♘b7 (24 ♘b3 ♖ag8) 24...♗xc2.

166) No, because after 12 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 13 ♖xe7 Black gains a strong counter-attack by 13...♖g6 (an idea that his ...♖a6 move rather telegraphed; but not 13...♗xh3? 14 ♕f3 ♗xg2 15 ♕xd5). If you felt that this line was not a good winning try for White, then you have solved the puzzle. If you analysed further and determined that White can just about hold a draw, then very well done indeed. The critical line runs 14 f3 (14 g4? ♕h5 leaves White in considerable danger) 14...♗xh3 15 ♖e2 ♕xf3 16 ♕f1 (16 ♕d2? ♗xg2 17 ♖xg2 ♖e8) 16...♗xg2 17 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 18 ♕xg2 ♕d1+ 19 ♕f1 ♕g4+ 20 ♕g2 (20 ♔h1? ♖e8 21 ♗f4 ♕h4+ 22 ♔g2 ♖e1) 20...♕d1+ with perpetual check.

167) 37 ♖b7!! wins – a hard move to find, but easy to calculate once you have seen it. The main idea is 37...♖xb7 38 ♔f3, when Black suffers a disaster on the g-file, now that the rook has been diverted to b7. Other moves lose prosaically: 37...♖g8 38 ♖xb6, 37...♕d4 38 ♕xf2 ♖g8+ 39 ♔f3!, 37...♕xb7 38 ♗xb7 ♖g8 39 ♕xg8+ or 37...♘xe4 38 ♖xb6 ♘xg3 39 ♖xb8.

A brief summary of why other moves fail: 37 ♔f1? ♘g4! 38 ♖xf7 ♖g8 gives White nothing better than 39 ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 40 ♗xg8+ ♖xg8 41 ♕h4+ ♘h6 42 ♖xg8 ♔xg8 43 ♕xh6 ♕d4, with a queen ending that should be drawn. 37 ♔f3? ♖g8 38 ♕h4 (38 ♕xf2 ♖xg1) 38...♘xe4 39 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 will lead to perpetual check. In the game, **37 ♕xf2? ♖g8+ 38 ♔f1 ♕b5+ 39 ♔e1 ♖gc8 40 ♕e3 ♖c2** gave Black enough counterplay. For example: 41 ♖a1 ♖xb2 42 ♖c1 h6! (solving the back-rank problem helps free the b-pawn; 42...♖xh2? 43 ♗xb3) 43 ♖g3 ♖c2 44 ♗xb3 ♕a5+ and ...♖xb3 with a likely draw, while after 41 ♔d1 ♖bc8 42 ♖xf7 h5! (42...♕a6?? 43 ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 44 ♕h3#) the threat of ...♕a6 gives Black sufficient counterchances.

168) No! The tactical blow **37...♘d5!** cuts the communication between the two white rooks, and draws comfortably. Instead, 37...bxa2? 38 ♖1d6+ ♔f7 39 ♖a7 ♖b2+ 40 ♖d2 offers Black no hope; nor does 37...b2? 38 ♖7d6+ ♔f7 39 ♖b1 ♖b4 40 ♔d3. After **38 ♖7xd5** (there is little choice, as ...♘c3+ was threatened; 38 exd5+? ♔xd7 leaves White in some trouble) **38...cxd5 39 exd5+ ♔d6 40 axb3 ♖xb3 41 ♖a1 ♖c3 42 ♖a6+ ♔d7 43 ♖a7+**, for either side to avoid the repetition would involve a concession.

169) That's what Black thought in the game, and he duly rolled over and died. However, he had a saving resource in 33...d5!, since after 34 exd6 (otherwise, Black has greatly improved his position, and has a marked structural superiority) 34...♗f6 Black can win an exchange and seek to eliminate the d6-pawn in an acceptable way. After 35 ♕e3 ♖d7 (there's no hurry to take on d4; 35...♗xd4 36 ♕xd4 gives White more chances), it is not so easy to find useful moves for White, and 36 ♕e4 ♖xd6 37 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 38 ♖d8+ permits Black acceptable play after 38...♔g7 39 ♖b8 ♖cxc3 40 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 41 ♖xb5 ♖d3 or 38...♗xd8 39 ♖xd8+ ♔h7 40 ♗d4 g5.

33...d6?! has no advantages over pushing the pawn two squares (Black's main 'threat' then is 34...d5), while it gives White ideas like 34 f5 exf5 35

♖d5. In the game, **33...♖da8? 34 ♖xd7 ♖a2 35 ♕e3** allowed White an obvious advantage.

170) You could probably have solved this by a process of elimination. The main danger, perhaps, is deciding the position is hopeless, and simply giving up. 20...♗c4? is no good in view of 21 ♕xf5, but 20...♗a2! is the right move. Black retains his bishop-pair and sufficient counterplay against the white position:

a) 21 ♕xf5? is now bad due to 21...♕c2, exploiting the vulnerability of White's first and second ranks.

b) 21 ♕d2 can be met in various ways, including 21...♕c2!? 22 ♖xd6 (not 22 0-0?? ♕xd2 23 ♖xd2 ♗xh2+) 22...♕b1+ 23 ♔e2 ♖xd6 24 ♕xd6 ♕xb2+ 25 ♔f3 h6 26 ♘h3 ♗f7 with an unbalanced game.

c) After 21 0-0, Black must avoid 21...♗c4?? 22 ♕xf5 ♗xf1 23 ♕xh7+, while 21...h6 22 ♘f3 ♗c4 gives White two pawns for an exchange after either 23 ♕xf5 ♗xf1 24 ♔xf1 or 23 ♖xc4 ♕xc4 24 ♕xf5. By 21...♗xh2+ 22 ♔h1 ♖xd4 23 ♕xd4 ♗d6 Black regains his pawn with a defensible position.

In the game, **20...♕e7?! 21 ♘xe6 ♕xe6 22 0-0** left White a solid pawn up, although Black did manage to scrape a draw in the end.

171) 18 ♗xf5!! (other moves lose rather hopelessly; for instance, 18 ♕f4? bxc3 19 fxg7 ♖xb2 20 gxf8♕+ ♔xf8 21 ♗xf5 ♖b1+ leads to mate) **18...hxg5** (18...♘xf6 19 exf6 makes no difference) **19 hxg5** (White intends ♖dh1 followed by ♖h8#; there's no direct defence against this, but Black's counterattack saves the day) **19...bxc3! 20 ♗h7+** (White has to settle for a draw; 20 ♖dh1 cxb2+ 21 ♔b1 ♕xa2+! 22 ♔xa2 b1♕+ removes the supporting rook, and after 23 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 White must give perpetual check anyway) **20...♔h8 21 ♗g6+ ♔g8 22 ♗h7+ ♔h8 23 ♗d3+ ♔g8 24 ♗h7+ ½-½**

172) 24 ♗xe3! refutes the attack. After 24...♕h3+ (24...♗xf3 25 ♕xe6) 25 ♔e2 ♗xf3+ 26 ♔xf3 dxe3 27 ♔xe3 Black has nothing like enough play for the large amount of material he has sacrificed.

The game continued **24 fxe3? ♕f6 25 e4** (25 ♖g2? dxe3 26 ♗xe3 ♗xf3 is good for Black) **25...♕xf3+ 26 ♔e1 ♗xe4!** (presumably the point Markowski missed), when Black had sufficient play, and the best White could do was reach an unbalanced endgame.

173) 28...♘d5!

This nice tactic threatens a fork by ...♘e3+ and exploits a potential pin on the c-file (after 29 exd5 cxd5 Black regains the piece with interest).

Other moves leave Black at least slightly worse. After 28...♘e5?! 29 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 30 ♘c5 or 28...♕g6?! 29 ♘c5 White activates his knight, while Black has missed the chance to bring his f6-knight into the heart of the battle.

29 ♖d3

29 ♖e1 is the best defensive try, covering the e3-square and preparing exd5. Then 29...♕g6! shows a key idea in several lines: the queen hits the loose d6-bishop and pins the e4-pawn against the white queen. Maybe spotting these loose pieces helped you solve the puzzle? 30 ♗a3 gives Black a variety of attractive options, of which the most promising appears to be 30...♗xc4 31 ♕xc4 ♘e5 32 ♕c2 ♖cd8! (a computer line; 32...♘f4+ 33 ♔h1 ♘e6 is a more 'human' solution – less incisive, but sufficient to conclude that Black has

good chances) 33 ♗c1 (33 ♖ad1 ♘f4+ 34 ♔h1 ♕h5; 33 ♘c5 ♘f4+ 34 ♔h1 ♘xf3) 33...♘xf3! 34 ♔xf3 ♘b4 35 ♕e2 ♘d3 36 ♗f4 f5 37 ♘c3 fxe4+ 38 ♘xe4 c5, when White is paralysed. 29 ♖a3 is also met by 29...♕g6, when 30 ♗xb5 cxb5 31 ♕b2 (31 ♕a2 ♘7f6! 32 ♘c5 b4) 31...♖xe4! works nicely, based on 32 fxe4? ♕xe4+ 33 ♔g1 ♖c2.

Now, instead of **29...♕g6? 30 ♗xb5 cxb5 31 ♕d1**, when White was just about able to hold his position together, 29...♘e5! leaves White in deep trouble. The main idea is 30 ♗xe5 ♘b4, when Black wins the exchange.

174) 22...♖xe3! 23 fxe3 ♕a7 is a good exchange sacrifice, as Black has strong pressure against the weak e3-pawn and is likely to win the a5-pawn (following ...♕c5). With two pawns and excellent piece-play in return for an exchange, Black will have excellent chances. Note how poor White's remaining bishop is, how exposed his king is on the dark squares, and how difficult it is for him to bring his rooks to good locations.

A similar sacrifice occurred in a famous game Polugaevsky-Petrosian, USSR Ch, Moscow 1983. I am sure that if Agaragimov had ever seen that game, he would not have lost this one – an example of the value of pattern recognition in a strategic situation. He played **22...♕d8? 23 ♗d2 ♖b8 24 ♗xb4 ♕d7 25 ♖b1**, when only a grim defence awaited Black.

175) 31...♕d7! is the perfect answer. Black concedes no material and prepares a deadly snare against either capture on g7. It turns out that White cannot win the black queen without also losing his own.

31...♖ff7? allows White to regain the exchange, and it will be hard work for Black to make anything of his better structure in the endgame due to White's more active pieces in lines like 32 ♘h6+ ♔h8 (32...♔f8?! 33 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 34 f5 leaves the black king more exposed) 33 ♘xf7+ ♖xf7 34 ♕f3 ♕c6 (34...c3 35 ♖g3) 35 f5.

32 ♘xg7 (a knight retreat is also hopeless, while 32 ♖xg7+ ♕xg7 33 ♘xg7 ♖xg7 leaves the white queen pinned) **32...♕xg4!** (this is the key point – striking at the supporting forces is often the best way to break the power of an attack; not 32...♕xg7?? 33 ♔h1 {33 ♖xg7+?? ♖xg7}, preserving the white queen) **0-1**. After 33 ♕xg4 ♖xg7 there is no escape for the queen.

176) 17...♗xg5! is a neat tactic, based on a possible queen check on h4, which saves Black's piece and keeps the game level. After **18 ♗xh5** (18 ♘xe6 fxe6 19 ♗xh5 ♕f6 is fine for Black) **18...♗xe3 19 ♗xg6** (not 19 fxe3? ♕h4+ 20 ♔d2 ♗xh5) **19...♗xd4!** (19...♕h4? fails to 20 ♕f3! because 20...♗xd4 21 ♕xf7+ ♔d8 22 ♕e8+ ♔c7 23 ♘b5+ leads to mate) **20 ♕xd4** (20 ♗xf7+? ♔xf7 21 ♕xd4 axb4 leaves White's pawns badly damaged) **20...fxg6 21 ♘b5** White's initiative was enough to keep him out of trouble: **21...♔f8 22 c4 ♕e7 23 cxd5 exd5+ 24 ♔f1 ♘f6 25 ♘d6 ♕d7 26 ♖b1 ♘e4 27 bxa5 ♕h3+ 28 ♔g1 ♕g4+ ½-½**.

177) 29...♕e2! 30 ♖h1 (30 ♕f5?! ♕h5; 30 ♗h7+ ♔h8! 31 ♖h1 comes to the same thing) 30...♕xf2 31 ♗h7+ ♔h8 (31...♔f8?? 32 ♘d7#) 32 ♗c2+ ♔g8 33 ♗h7+ with a draw by repetition. In the game, Black failed to spot his opponent's principal ideas, and lost in just two more moves: **29...♖ad8? 30 ♖h1! ♖d6** (30...♕e2 31 ♗h7+ ♔f8 {or 31...♔h8 32 ♗e4+} 32 ♗e4! ♔g8

{32...♕xf2 33 ♖h8#} 33 ♕f5 and the black king will be mated) **31 ♖h8+! 1-0.** 31...♔xh8 32 ♕h2+ ♔g8 33 ♕h7+ ♔f8 34 ♕h8#.

178) 17 ♗xh6? fails because of a well-concealed tactical point: 17...♗xg3 (not 17...gxh6?? 18 ♕xh6+ ♘h7 19 f6) 18 ♗xg7++ ♔xg7 19 ♕xg3+ ♔h8 20 ♕h4+ ♘h7! (otherwise it is perpetual check) 21 f6 (this looks like forced mate, but there is a way out) 21...♘f3+! 22 gxf3 ♖g8+ and ...♖g6.

Therefore White bailed out with **17 ♖xg7!**, and the game ended **17...♔xg7 18 ♕xh6+** (after 18 ♗xh6+? ♔g8 White can't bring pieces into the attack quickly enough) **18...♔g8 19 ♕g5+ ♔h8 20 ♕h6+ ♔g8** (20...♘h7?? 21 f6 is now forced mate, because 21...♘f3+ doesn't hit the white queen, and can be met by 22 ♔h1) **21 ♕g5+ ½-½.** 17...h5 fails to avoid the draw, as 18 ♕e3 (18 ♖g5?! ♖e8 gives the king an escape-route and although the game is rather unclear after 19 ♗e3 ♕d6 20 ♔h1 ♗a6!, it is Black who has the better winning chances) 18...♔xg7 19 ♕h6+ is essentially no different.

179) 29...f3!

Black should not delay. 29...♔g7? allows White to squirm out by 30 ♕d2, when 30...f3? fails to 31 ♘xg4 hxg4+ 32 ♕xh6+, and 30...♕h3 is met by 31 gxf4 and ♖g1(+). 29...♕h3? may keep some advantage, but is a poor second best. After 30 gxf4 ♖xf4 31 ♖g1+ ♗g4 32 ♖g3 ♕h4 33 ♕e1 White is putting together a defence.

30 a3

The main point is that White is mated after 30 ♘xg4 hxg4+ 31 ♔g1 ♔g7 32 ♕d2 ♖h5 and ...♖fh8. And if White doesn't take the queen, the move ...f3 will be a nail in the coffin of the white king. Black will play ...♕g7 and ...h4 in most cases, with an easy and decisive attack:

a) 30 ♖g1 ♕g7 31 d4 (31 ♕d2 ♗h3 32 ♕e3 h4 with ...♖hf6 and ...♗g2+ among Black's ideas) 31...exd4 (Black has ideas of attacking e4) 32 ♕f1 (32 ♕d3 ♗h3 33 ♘xf3 ♖hf6) 32...♗g4 with an overwhelming position.

b) 30 ♕d2 ♕g7 31 ♕e3 ♖hf6 is similar. Here is a sample line: 32 ♖cd1 ♗h3 33 ♖g1 h4 34 ♖d2 hxg3 35 ♖xg3 ♗g2+ 36 ♔g1 ♖g6 and Black wins.

c) 30 d4 cxd4 31 ♕d3 ♕h3 (White's idea is 31...♕g7 32 ♘xf3, though even this is rotten for him) 32 ♖g1 ♔h7 33 ♕f1 ♗g4 and White manages to survive only into a lost ending.

30...♕g7 31 ♕e1 ♔h7 32 b4 h4 33 ♖g1 ♗g4 (White has no decent reply to the threat of ...♖h8 and ...♔g8) **34 ♕e3 ♕g6 35 ♕xh6+ ♔xh6 36 gxh4 ♖f4 37 ♖g3 ♕h5 38 ♖cg1 ♗e6** and Black won.

180) With **31...♖bb8?**, Black is relying on defence. However, his position offers White too many weak points to attack and, given a couple of moves' respite, he is able to whip up decisive threats.

Black's only way to hold the game is to counterattack – in line with the old cliché that opposite bishops favour the attacker. 31...♖fb8! 32 ♕f6+ (32 g3 ♖b1) 32...♔h6 33 g3 (33 ♕xf7?? loses to 33...♖b1, as do 33 h5? and 33 g4?; 33 ♖d6?! ♖b1 34 ♗b3 ♖xf1+ 35 ♔xf1 ♕c5 leaves White fighting for a draw; 33 ♗a2 ♖b2 {threatening ...♖xf2} 34 ♖d6 ♕a4 35 g3 ♖xa2 36 gxf4 ♕xe4 leads to a draw) 33...♖b1 34 gxf4 ♕d3 and one player or the other will have to give perpetual check.

32 ♕f6+ ♔h6

32...♔g8 33 h5 (threatening hxg6 and ♕xg6+) 33...gxh5 34 g3 ♗xg3

(after 34...♗d2 35 ♖d1 ♕c3 36 ♖a7 Black's position crumbles) 35 ♔h1 and the open g-file proves fatal for Black.

33 g3 ♗d2 34 ♔g2

White now intends ♖h1 and h5. There is no good defence: **34...♖bd8** (after 34...♕d3 35 ♖h1 ♖b1 36 ♖xb1 ♕xb1 37 ♖a7 White can start taking pawns without relaxing his grip) **35 ♖d1 ♕d3 36 ♖a7** and White made decisive material gains.

181) White must counterattack, and the way to do so is 39 ♖e5!:

a) 39...♗xd2 40 ♖xd2 ♖b1+ 41 ♕xb1 ♗xb1 42 ♖xc5+ ♔d8 43 ♔xb1 gives White at least enough material for the queen.

b) 39...♗c7 40 ♖xc5 (threatening ♖xc7+ followed by ♗a5+) 40...♕a4 (40...♖b1+ 41 ♕xb1 ♗xb1 transposes to line 'c') 41 ♗b4 (threatening ♕e5) 41...♖xb4 (41...♗xd3? 42 ♖b2! ♗e4 43 ♘f3! ♗xf3? 44 ♖xc7+ ♔xc7 45 ♕e5+) 42 ♖xc2 ♕xc2 43 ♕xb4 and Black has nothing better than giving perpetual check.

c) 39...♖b1+ 40 ♕xb1 ♗xb1 41 ♖xc5+ ♗c7 42 ♗a5 ♖f7 43 ♔xb1 with a roughly level ending in prospect; e.g., 43...♔d8 44 ♗xc7+ ♖xc7 45 ♖xc7 ♕h1+ 46 ♔b2 ♕e1 47 ♖c2 ♕b4+ (47...♔xc7 48 ♘f3 ♕e3 49 ♘e5) 48 ♔c1 ♕e1+ repeats.

Other moves fail. 39 ♖xe6? ♖b1+ 40 ♕xb1 ♗xb1 41 ♖xf6 ♗xd3 leaves White defenceless; e.g., 42 ♖f8+ ♗d8 43 ♘f3 (43 ♖g2 ♕a3) 43...♕b7. The game ended **39 ♗xa5? ♕xa5! 40 ♖f1** (40 ♕xa5? ♖b1#) **40...♖b1+ 41 ♕xb1 ♗xb1 42 ♖xb1 ♕c3+ 43 ♖eb2 ♖f7 44 ♘f3 ♖b7 45 ♘e5 h5 0-1**. Black wins most simply by using zugzwang: once White moves his knight, Black can exchange on b2 and take the d3-pawn.

182) 33 ♖d2 is the only move, preserving the rook while also covering d3 and f2. It is also the right way to make use of the pin on the h2-b8 diagonal. Then:

a) 33...♘d3+?? loses to 34 ♖xd3 cxd3 35 ♕xb8.

b) 33...♖f8?! can be met by 34 ♕e4 ♘d3+ (34...♕b5+ 35 ♔c2 ♕a4+ 36 ♔b1) 35 ♔c2 ♘xf2 36 ♕xe6!?.

c) 33...♖h8 gives rise to many possibilities; e.g., 34 ♘c2!? (intending ♘b4+; 34 ♕d4 allows Black a draw if he wishes) 34...♘d3+ 35 ♖xd3 cxd3 36 ♘b4+ ♔a5 (36...♔b5? 37 ♘xd3) 37 ♕f7 a6 38 ♕xe6 and White is not worse.

d) 33...♖c8 is roughly level: 34 ♕d4 (not 34 ♘c2? ♘d3+ 35 ♖xd3 cxd3 36 ♘b4+ ♔b5) 34...♘d3+ 35 ♔b1 ♕b5+ 36 ♔a1 e5 37 ♕h4 ♕a5 38 ♘d1 ♕a3 39 ♖c2.

Let's briefly see why other moves fail: 33 ♖d1? loses to 33...♖f8, since f2 falls next move. 33 ♖d4? ♖f8 has the same problem, while 33 ♖d5? loses to 33...♕xd5 34 ♘xd5 ♘d3+. In the game White apparently relied on the pin of the black knight against the undefended rook on b8, but after **33 ♔c2?? ♘xd7 0-1**, sadly for White, the knight defends its rook.

183) White clearly needs to parry the mating ideas, but the obvious ways to do so cost him both his kingside pawns *and* the b-pawn. Some trickery is needed. He can survive by playing 33 ♖b1! ♗h3 (33...♖xb1+ 34 ♔xf2; 33...♗xa8 34 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 35 ♖xa8 ♖xb6; 33...♖a2 34 ♖a1) 34 ♖c1 ♖f6 (threatening ...♖bf2; 34...♖xh2? 35 ♖b1 ♖bd2 36 ♗h1 ♗f5 37 b7 ♗xb1 38 ♖g8+) 35 ♗e4 ♖bf2 36 ♗d3 ♖g2+ 37 ♔h1 ♖b2 38 a4 ♖ff2 (38...♖d6 can be met by 39 ♗e4 or 39 ♗f1, in both

cases maintaining the balance) 39 ♗e4 ♗g2+ 40 ♗xg2 ♖xg2 41 a5 ♖xh2+ with a draw.

Other moves leave White with a difficult ending, or worse: 33 a4? ♗xa8 34 ♖xa8 ♖g2+ 35 ♔h1 ♖xh2+ 36 ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 37 ♔h1 ♖xg3 38 a5 ♖b5! 39 ♖e2 ♖a3; 33 h4? ♗xa8 34 ♖xa8 ♖g2+ 35 ♔h1 ♖xg3; 33 g4? ♗xa8 34 ♖xa8 ♖g2+ 35 ♔h1 ♖xh2+ 36 ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 37 ♔h1 ♖xg4; 33 ♖d1? ♗xa8 34 ♖xa8 ♖g2+ 35 ♔f1 ♖xh2 36 ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 37 ♔f1 ♖xg3; 33 b7? ♗d5 forces mate. In the game, **33 ♗xg2? ♖xg2+ 34 ♔h1 ♖xh2+ 35 ♔g1 ♖hg2+** was winning for Black because after 36 ♔h1 ♖xg3 37 ♖a1 ♖gb3 the b-pawn falls.

184) Bitalzadeh – Stefansson
Sarajevo 2010

21...♗c5! threatens a deadly discovered check, and forces White to play circumspectly: 22 ♗xb7 (initiating a sequence of forced moves; 22 ♔h1 ♗xg2+ 23 ♔xg2 ♖e2+ 24 ♔h3 ♖xb2 is clearly satisfactory for Black) 22...♖exa3+ 23 ♔g2 ♖xa1 24 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 and there is no reason Black should be any worse.

The obvious move chosen in the game, **21...♗xg2?**, leaves Black clearly worse. After **22 ♔xg2 b5 23 ♖f3 ♖e4 24 ♖b3 ♖e2+ 25 ♔f3 ♖xh2 26 ♖xb5** White was still only one pawn up, but his connected passed pawns on the queenside were a very potent force, and he went on to win without difficulty.

185) Haast – Vedder
KNSB Cup, Amersfoort 2010

By **34...♖f5! 35 ♖e2 ♖xc5!** Black won back his pawn with an equal game. **36 ♕g4** (36 ♕xc5 is met by 36...♕f3+ and ...♕xe2) **36...♖e5 37 ♖e3** (the critical point is that 37 ♖xe4?? loses a rook: 37...♕c6 38 f3 f5) **37...♕e7** and a draw was agreed some moves later.

186) Krush – Ro. Hess
USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010

33...♕xf4! is the only defence: 34 ♖xf6 e3! 35 ♖g6 (threatening f6; 35 ♖e6 ♖xe6 36 fxe6 ♕xc4 favours Black, while 35 c7 e2 36 c8♕ ♖xc8 37 ♖e6 ♖f7 38 f6 ♖g8 leaves Black at least safe) 35...e2! and the only question is whether White can draw.

The game, however, lasted just two more moves: **33...♕xf5?** (perhaps focused on White's threat of ♘h5, Black fails to spot that the knight has another square from which to cause devastation) **34 ♘d5! ♕e5** (or: 34...♘xd5 35 ♖xh6+! gxh6 36 ♕xg8#; 34...♖f7 35 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 36 ♖xg7) **35 ♘xf6 1-0**.

187) Oratovsky – Vitiugov
Israeli Team Ch 2010

18...h6! (not deterred by the fact that f7 collapses, Black strikes at the attacking forces) **19 ♖xf7** (19 ♘gxe6 ♗xe6 {not 19...♕xh5? 20 ♘g7+} gives White nothing, while 19 ♖ae1 hxg5 is a disaster for White) **19...hxg5 20 ♕xg6 ♕xh2+ 21 ♔f2 0-0-0**. Now White's king is the one in danger, whereas Black's is safe. With an extra pawn in the bag, and strong threats to boot, Black won comfortably.

188) O. Budnikov – Strygin
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

18...♗f4! is by far the best move. After 19 ♖e7+ (not 19 ♗e3? ♖he8) 19...♔f8 20 ♗e3 (20 ♖e3 gxf6 is similar; 20 fxg7+? ♔xe7 21 gxh8♕ ♕xc2#) 20...gxf6 21 ♗d3 (21 ♗xf4 ♔xe7) 21...♗xd3 22 ♕xd3 ♔xe7 23 ♗xf4, Black's position is still a little disorganized, but in return he is an exchange ahead and White cannot easily make

inroads or establish any clear compensation.

In the game, **18...gxf6? 19 ♗d3** gave White complete control: material is level, but Black has an exposed king and several weak pawns. **19...♗xd3?!** (19...♗f4 can be met by 20 ♗e3 or 20 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 21 ♗c3) **20 ♕xd3 ♗f4+?** (now this move just wastes time and presents White with a target) **21 ♔b1 ♕d7 22 ♗c5 1-0**.

189) Elianov – Cornette

French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

44...♕g7!

The important idea here is not to focus narrowly on the kingside: the decisive sequence features ideas on both sides of the board by queen and knight. 44...♖h4? also intends to double on the h-file, but creates no pressure on the long diagonal, so 45 ♖dd1 (not 45 ♖h1? ♖xg4+!) 45...♕h6?! 46 ♖h1 defends comfortably.

45 ♖dd1

45 ♕d1 ♕h8 46 ♖h1 ♘xg4! 47 ♖xh6 (47 fxg4 ♖xh1 48 ♕xh1 f3+ costs White his queen) 47...♘e3+ 48 ♔g1 ♕xh6 and ...♕h3 with a decisive attack. 45 ♖h1? ♖xh1 46 ♔xh1 ♘xf3 is an easy win for Black, since 47 ♖xd6 ♕h7+ 48 ♔g2 ♕h2+ 49 ♔xf3 ♕g3# is mate.

45...♘c4! (this is the key idea: either the knight lands on e3 or the queen breaks through to b2) **46 ♖h1** (now Black forces a queen ending with two solid extra pawns and the safer king, but 46 ♕xc4 ♕xb2+ 47 ♖f2 ♖h2+ 48 ♔xh2 ♕xf2+ 49 ♔h1 ♕xf3+ gives Black an even more easily won ending) **46...♘e3+ 47 ♔g1 ♖xh1+ 48 ♔xh1 ♘xd1 49 ♕xd1 ♕xb2 50 ♕xd6 ♕e2 51 ♕d8+ ♔h7 52 ♕xg5 ♕xf3+ 53 ♔h2 ♕xe4 54 ♕c5 ♕e2+ 55 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 0-1**

190) L. Nikolaev – Tukhaev

Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2010

27 ♕h5! is the only good move, staying active while avoiding Black's main threat (...♕h4). The game is then likely to end in a draw, as White's centralized pieces will prove powerful if Black does not adopt a forcing approach. 27...g6 (27...♖h2 28 ♕g5 ♗h3! is similar) 28 ♕g5 ♗h3! 29 ♕xe7 ♖g2+ 30 ♔h1 ♖h2+ 31 ♔g1 ♖g2+ is a draw by perpetual check.

A brief survey of why other moves fail: 27 ♘xe6?? ♕h4 and White is mated. 27 ♕e1? ♗h3! (not 27...♕h4? 28 ♕xg3) 28 ♘xg3 (28 ♕xg3 ♕xa3!) 28...♕g5, threatening ...♖f1+, leaves White in great difficulties. White's choice in the game, **27 ♕c1?**, parries the ...♕h4 threat by attacking the b2-rook, but is not active enough. Black could then have won by 27...♖bf2! 28 ♕g5 ♗h3! because 29 ♕xe7? allows 29...♖f1+ 30 ♖xf1 ♖xf1#, while after 29 ♕xg3 ♖g2+ 30 ♕xg2 ♗xg2 31 ♔xg2 ♕e5 32 ♘c2 ♕b2 33 ♗a4 ♕b6 White's king is too exposed.

191) Ehlvest – Stripunsky

USA Ch, Saint Louis 2010

42...♗g5! (the only move; Black is mated after any king move: 42...♔h6? 43 f5+; 42...♔f7? 43 ♕xh5+; or 42...♔f6? 43 e5+ ♔f7 44 ♕xh5#) **43 ♖xg5+** (43 ♕xh5 b1♕ and with the white rook pinned, White's attack amounts to no more than a few checks: 44 ♕xg5+ ♔f7 45 ♕g7+ {45 f5 ♕xg1+} 45...♔e8 46 ♕g6+ ♔e7) **43...♔f6!** (again the only move; 43...♔f7? 44 ♕xh5+ ♔e7 45 ♖g7+ ♔d6 46 ♕e5+ ♔c6 47 ♕xe6+ ♔b5 48 ♖b7+ and mate next move) **44 e5+ ♔e7** (thanks to the bishop's self-sacrifice, this square is available to the king) **45 ♗b4+ ♔d8 46 ♗a5+** and now **46...♔d7?! 47 ♖g7+ ♖f7!** was good

enough to win, but 46...♔e8! 47 ♕xh5+ ♔d7 48 ♖g7+ ♔c6 49 ♕f3+ ♔c5! 50 ♗b6+ ♔b5 is even more convincing, as the king makes a clean escape.

192) Kunte – Shyam

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

25...♗xb2! is best, mainly because it gives the rook the e5-square in the line 26 ♖xb2?! ♘a5! 27 ♕d5+ ♔h8 28 ♘xa5?! (28 ♘c7 ♘xc4 29 ♕xc4 ♘e5) 28...♖e5, when only Black can be better. 26 ♘c7 should lead to a draw (e.g., 26...bxa3 27 ♘a6 ♕a8 28 ♘c7 ♕b8 or 26...♗f6 27 ♘a6 ♕a8 28 ♘c7 ♕b8, with a repetition in both cases), because 26...♘xd6?! 27 ♕xd6 ♗e5 28 ♘xe5 ♖e6 29 ♘xd7 ♖xd6 30 ♘xb8 bxa3 isn't a good winning try.

In the game, **25...♘c5?** allowed White a solid advantage, and he won after **26 ♗xf6 ♖xf6** (26...♘d3 27 ♘c7 gxf6 28 ♖e3) **27 ♘c7 ♗b7 28 ♖xb4 ♖c8 29 ♘a5 ♖xd6 30 ♕xd6 ♕xc7 31 ♘xb7 1-0**.

193) Gryson – Van Herck

Gent 2010

Perhaps you saw that ...g5 is a key idea, but the problem is how to implement it. The right way is 22...♕e8!, with the cunning point that 23 ♘xe5 is met by 23...g5!, with unclear play after 24 ♕xg5+ ♘xg5 25 ♖xf5 ♘xe5 or 24 ♕xf5 ♘xg3+ 25 ♔h2 ♘xf5 26 ♖xf5 ♘xe5. After 23 ♗d4 ♖d5 Black has secured his pieces. In the game, the immediate **22...g5?** was refuted by **23 ♕xe5 ♘xe5 24 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 25 ♔h2**, with an easy win for White thanks to his extra material.

Chapter 6

194) 25...dxe3!!

This temporary queen sacrifice wins cleanly. 25...♘xf2? 26 ♔xf2 dxe3+ 27 ♔e2! (27 ♔xe3?? ♕h6+) 27...♕xd3+ 28 ♖xd3 leaves Black with a difficult ending due to White's queenside majority and active king. 25...♘e5? 26 ♕e4 also lets White escape from his difficulties.

26 ♕xd6 exf2+ 27 ♔f1 (27 ♔g2 ♘e3+ is essentially the same: 28 ♔xf2 ♘xd1+ or 28 ♔f3 ♖xd6) **27...♘e3+ 28 ♔e2** (the basic problem for White is that 28 ♔xf2 ♘xd1+ is check) **0-1**. 28...♖xd6 29 ♖xd6 f1♕+. The knight lives long enough to support the pawn's promotion, and the fact that it is check denies White time to deliver a back-rank mate. Always think carefully when there are pawns near promotion and active knights!

195) 28 ♔h1!

This quiet move is best. Now 29 ♖h5 is a real threat, since 29...♕d4 doesn't pin the white queen. Black has no adequate defence.

Other moves don't make progress. 28 ♖h5? allows 28...♕d4, nullifying White's attack, while after 28 ♖f2?! ♕b1+! (28...♕a1+? loses because 29 ♗f1 ♘xb4 30 ♖h5 leads to mate) White can only win by repeating the position and finding the winning move at the second time of asking:

a) 29 ♗f1? ♘xb4 30 ♖h5 ♕g6 leaves it unclear if White has any advantage; e.g., 31 ♕e7 ♗e6 32 ♕xb4 ♖fd8 (not 32...gxf6? 33 ♕h4 ♔g7 34 ♗d3 f5 35 ♖f3 ♖ad8 36 ♗c2!) 33 ♕h4 ♖d1 gives White an extra piece, but Black has three healthy pawns and sound defences.

b) 29 ♖f1 ♕b2 merely repeats, when White must still find 30 ♔h1! in order to make progress. But at least if you failed to see the win, hopefully you saw

that you could bail out with a draw in this way.

28...♘e7 29 ♖h5! (29 ♕xe7 ♗e6 30 ♖h5 is also strong, but less clear-cut) **29...♘g8 30 ♘xg8 ♔xg8 31 ♗xf7+! ♔h7?** (31...♖xf7 is necessary, but 32 ♕e8+ ♔h7 33 ♕xf7 is at the very least unpleasant for Black) **32 ♕g5 ♕c2 33 ♖xh6+! gxh6 34 ♗g8+! 1-0**. It is mate after 34...♔h8 35 ♕xh6+ ♔xg8 36 ♖xf8# or 34...♖xg8 35 ♖f7+ ♔h8 36 ♕xh6+ ♕h7 37 ♕xh7#.

196) 38...♗h4!

No doubt you saw that 38...♖xh1?? is ruled out by 39 ♕c8+ ♔h7 40 ♕g8#. But perhaps it was less obvious that 38...♖c2? (intending ...♖f2+) also fails. The problem is the cunning reply 39 ♖h2! (not the passive 39 ♖f1? ♗h4 40 g5 {only move} 40...♗e1!, when White is fighting to survive) 39...♗h4 (otherwise Black loses immediately; for example, 39...♖xh2? 40 ♕c8+) 40 g5!? ♖f2+ 41 ♖xf2 ♕xf2+ 42 ♔g4, when the opposite bishops fail to save Black after 42...♕g3+ 43 ♔h5 ♕xg5+ 44 ♕xg5 ♗xg5 45 ♔g6 or 42...♕xf5+ 43 ♔xf5 hxg5 44 a4.

39 ♖xh4

There's no good answer: 39 ♖xc1 allows 39...♕f2#, while after 39 g5 ♕f2+ 40 ♔g4 ♕g2+ 41 ♔h5 ♕xh1 42 ♗c4!? (42 ♗d5 ♗xg5+ 43 ♔g6 ♕f1) 42...♕d1+! (42...♗xg5+? loses to 43 ♔g6) 43 ♔g6 (or 43 ♔xh4 ♕h1+) 43...♕d6+ Black mops up safely.

39...♖f1+ 40 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 41 ♔f4 g5+! 42 ♕xg5 ♖f1+ 0-1

197) 16...♖xd4! is the right way to sacrifice the knight. It is offered 'passively' – that is, left to be taken. After 17 ♖xd4 ♗xd4! 18 hxg4 ♗xf2+ 19 ♔f1 ♗xe1 (19...♗xg3 is also good) 20 ♔xe1 ♕g1+ 21 ♔e2 ♖d8 22 ♕a5 ♖d6 Black will get at least four pawns for the piece, while retaining strong play against the white king.

Black instead preferred **16...♘xf2?**, which is the obvious sacrifice, but doesn't cause White any real problems. Black gets two or three pawns for the piece in a simplified position, and the only question is how much better White is: **17 ♔xf2 ♖xd4** (17...♗xd4+ 18 ♔g2 ♗g1?! is parried by 19 ♕c2 ♖xd1 20 ♘xd1, while 17...e5 18 ♕b3 ♕xb3 19 axb3 exd4 20 ♘b1 also favours White, partly because d3 is a fine blockading square for a knight – the black bishop has little scope) **18 ♖xd4 e5 19 ♕b3 exd4 20 ♕xb6 axb6 21 ♘a4 b5 22 ♘b6 ♖e8 23 ♘d3 ♖xe4 24 a4** and White had the better prospects.

198) No, 18...♕xb4! is good. There are enough loose pieces in White's position that 19 ♖d4 fails to win material: 19...♕xc5 20 ♗xe4 (20 ♖xe4?? ♘xe4 21 ♗xe4 drops material after 21...♕e5) 20...e5 21 ♘d3 ♕c3 22 ♗b2 ♕c2 23 ♕xc2 ♖xc2 24 ♘xe5 (24 ♖a4?! b5 25 ♖xa6 ♘xe4 26 ♗xe5 ♖d2 with strong counterplay) 24...♘xe4 25 ♖xe4 and now 25...f5! followed by ...♖xb2 leads to a level endgame (but not 25...♖xb2?! 26 ♘d3, after which White has all the chances).

199) 41 b7!

The basic idea is to distract the black rook, whose pin on the c-file is tying White down. If it refuses to budge, then the prospect of White getting a new queen arises. 41 dxe5?! ♖xc5 42 ♕xc5 ♕xc5 43 ♖xa2 ♕xb6 is a 2♖ vs ♕ ending where White can certainly play for a win, but Black can at least put up dogged resistance. 41 ♖xa2?? ♘xf3+ is winning for Black.

41...♖xc5

41...♖b8 allows the simple 42 dxe5. 41...♘xf3+ fails because White can swap his old queen for a new one: 42 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 43 bxc8♕+ ♔h7 and White can finally settle matters with 44 ♖xa2. Three white pieces are *en prise* after 41...♕xb7 42 ♘xb7 (42 dxe5? ♖xc5 43 ♖xa2 ♖xc3 44 ♖xc3 is another 2♖ vs ♕ ending, and this time Black is better placed to defend), but Black has no viable way to gorge himself on them: 42...♘xf3+ (42...♖xc3 43 ♖xc3) 43 ♕xf3 ♖xa4 44 ♘d6 and White will win, though he must be mindful of possible fortress defences.

42 b8♕+ ♔h7 1-0

White has many ways to win, such as 43 dxe5 ♖xc3 44 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 45 ♕h8+ ♔g5 46 h4#, but not 43 ♕xc5?? ♘xf3+ 44 ♔h1 ♕e4 45 ♖xa2 ♘d2+ 46 ♔h2 ♘f3+, which is a draw.

200) 22...♘e2+! (22...♖xc5? threatens ...♘e2+, but 23 ♕xc5 ♘e2+ 24 ♗xe2 ♗f4+ 25 gxf4 ♕xc5+ 26 ♗c4 gives White plenty for the queen) **23 ♗xe2 ♗f4+! 24 gxf4 ♖xe2** (Black has a decisive attack) **25 ♖d2** (giving the king an escape-route; 25 ♘d2 ♖xc5+ 26 ♕xc5 ♕xc5+ 27 ♘c4 ♗a6 is now hopeless for White) **25...♖xc5+ 26 ♔d1 ♖xd2+ 27 ♘xd2 ♕g4+ 28 ♔e1 d3!** (the *quietus* – White cannot avoid mate) **29 ♔f2 ♕xf4+ 0-1**

201) 42 ♗d3+! wins because as soon as the black king steps onto the e5-square, there are ♗g7+ skewer ideas:

a) 42...♔g4 43 ♗e2+ ♔f5 (43...♔xh4 44 ♗e3 and the threat of mate by ♖h6+ forces 44...♗g7 45 ♖e6, when White wins a piece to start with) 44 g4+ ♔e4 (44...♔e5 45 ♖d8 is similar to line 'b') 45 ♖e6+ and White picks off a bishop.

b) 42...♔e5 43 ♖d8 ♗c6 44 ♗g7+ ♔f4 (attempting to save the bishop with a ...♖a2 pin, but the king runs into trouble; 44...♔e6 45 ♗xb2 ♖a2? 46 ♗c4+) 45 ♗xb2 ♖a2 46 g3+ ♔g4 47 ♖g8+ ♔h5 48 ♖g5+ ♔h6 49 ♖g6+ and Black loses everything.

However, White played **42 ♗e3?**, when 42...b5! would have left the outcome unclear.

202) Perhaps Black noticed that ...♗b4 was an idea (with ...♖xc1 and ...♖d1+ as the follow-up), but gave up on it when he saw that the immediate 31...♗b4? achieves little because White can insert 32 ♖xd5 ♕xd5, when his back-rank weakness isn't such a problem.

However, the preliminary 31...a6! decisively improves matters. Wherever the white rook moves, the ...♗b4 idea will cost White heavy material. 32 ♖xb7 (32 ♖b3 is also met by 32...♗b4!; 32 ♖a5 leaves the rook undefended, so 32...♗xf2+ wins) 32...♗b4! 33 ♖xc8 (33 ♕f1 ♖xc1 34 ♕xc1 ♖d1+ shows Black's main idea) 33...♗xe1 34 ♖cc7 ♖d1 35 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 36 g3 ♕c5 and Black will win.

Black instead played the quiet continuation **31...♖c7?!**. Then White would still have been in the game if he had chosen the resilient 32 ♖a1.

203) 27 ♔e6!

Although Black can now win the white queen, he cannot restore material equality. 27 h4?? ♖f4+ 28 ♔e6 ♖f6+ costs White his queen, while 27 ♕h6? ♗g7! 28 ♕h5 ♖h4! 29 ♕xh4 (29 ♖d1? ♗h3+) 29...♘xh4+ 30 ♔g4 ♗xh1 31 ♔xh4 ♗d4 is pleasant for Black.

27...♗xh1 (after 27...♖d6+ 28 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 29 ♖d1 White is winning) **28 ♘d5 ♔g7 29 ♕d8 ♔h6** (29...♖e4 30 ♕g8+ ♔h6 31 ♘e3! threatens mate next move, and Black turns out not to have any particularly useful discovered

checks) **30 ♔d7** (30 ♔f5! is stronger, targeting the black king more directly) **30...♘g5? 31 ♕f8+ 1-0**. 31...♗g7 32 ♕d6+ leads to mate.

204) 30...♗xf3! is the correct sacrifice. After 31 gxf3 (31 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 32 ♘f2 ♖3f5 is safely better for Black) 31...♖xf3! (31...♘xf3+ 32 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 is less clear) White has no satisfactory reply:

a) After 32 ♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 33 ♔h1 (33 ♔f1? ♘xd4+) 33...♘xe1 34 ♖d7 ♖f1+ White is two pawns down and in a tangle.

b) 32 ♗f1 ♕f6 (32...♖xh3 33 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 34 ♔h1 ♘xe1 gives White some compensation) leaves White in trouble after 33 ♖dd1 ♘g4, 33 ♗g2 ♖xh3! or 33 ♕d1 ♕f5.

We should see why other moves are less good. 30...♘xf3+? misses the target, as the knight is the piece Black wants to land on f3 after the dust has settled: 31 gxf3! (not 31 ♗xf3? ♗xf3 32 gxf3 ♘e5) 31...♘e5 (31...♗xf3? 32 ♗d3 and 31...♕f6?! 32 ♖f1 ♗xf3 33 ♗d3! are good for White) 32 f4 allows Black enough play for the piece, but no more than that. 30...♖xf3? is overzealous since Black needs at least one rook on the f-file as back-up for the attacking forces, as 31 gxf3 ♖xf3 (31...♗xf3 32 ♘g5) 32 ♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 33 ♔f1 shows. Black preferred to bide his time by **30...♗c6? 31 ♕b4 ♕f6**, but then 32 f4 would have ruled out sacrifices on f3, and kept the game finely balanced.

205) It is surprising that **25 ♖f3!** is the only good move. The rook blocks the g2-bishop, which looks like a key player in any attack. But the point is to play e4, regaining the piece with a big advantage, and the obvious king retreat turns out to fail, partly because of the loose rook on e8. That leaves Black without a decent reply. And of the course the g2-bishop will play a role soon enough – the rook is just in transit.

The alternatives are ineffective: 25 ♗d5+? e6 only helps Black, while 25 e4? ♗g4 is a complete misfire for White. After 25 h3? ♔g8 26 g4 ♕a5! (26...hxg4 27 hxg4 ♗xg4? 28 ♖g3 ♗f5 29 e4 ♗c8? 30 ♖xg6+ gives White a decisive attack) 27 ♖f3 ♗c2 28 ♖d2 (28 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 29 ♗d5+ e6 30 ♗xe6+ ♖ff7 holds) 28...♗b1 White has no convincing way forward.

25...e6

Allowing White to win back the piece. The most critical line is 25...♔g8 26 ♖xf5! gxf5 27 ♕g5+ ♔f7 (27...♔h8 28 ♕xh5+ and ♕xe8) 28 ♕xf5+ ♔g7 29 ♕g5+ ♔f7 (29...♘g6 30 ♗e4 d5 31 ♗xg6 ♕xg6 32 ♕e5+ and ♕xc7) 30 ♕xh5+ ♘g6 31 ♗e4 ♖g8 32 ♕f5+ ♔e8 33 ♕e6 and White makes decisive material gains.

25...d5 26 cxd5 changes little: White still threatens to play e4, while 26...♔g8 27 d6! exd6 (27...♖cc8 defends the e8-rook, but loses to 28 ♖xf5 gxf5 29 ♕g5+, with d7 coming soon; 27...♖c2 28 ♖xf5 gxf5 29 ♕g5+, etc.) 28 ♖xf5 gxf5 29 ♗d5+ is a disaster for Black.

26 e4 ♖ce7 27 h4! (27 exf5 exf5 allows Black more counterplay) **27...♕a5 28 exf5 exf5 29 ♔h2 ♕xa2 30 ♖xd6 ♖e6 31 ♖d2 ♕a1 32 ♖fd3**. White has a large positional advantage and soon won.

206) The correct move is actually quite simple: 22 ♗b5! (threatening 23 ♖c8+ ♗d8 24 ♖xd8#) forces 22...0-0 23 ♗xd7, when White has a piece for two pawns and should win. The main point was not to be tempted by the false path chosen in the game: **22 ♖c8+? ♗d8 23 ♗b5 0-0!** (the only move, but a good

one, as now White fails to win a piece) **24 ♗xh6?** (24 ♗xd7? ♗xg5! reveals the main point – the check on c1 will hit a loose piece on either c8 or g5: 25 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 26 ♘xg5 ♕c1+ or 25 ♘xg5 ♖xc8 26 ♗xc8 ♕c1+; 24 ♗c1! is best, with a draw by repetition after 24...♕e7 25 ♗g5 ♕a3 {25...f6?? 26 exf6 gxf6 leaves the h6-knight unprotected} 26 ♗c1) **24...♖c7 25 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 26 ♗g5 ♖b8** gave Black the better chances, with an active rook and two pawns for two pieces in a fairly simplified position. He won quickly after some poor decisions by White.

207) 11...♔xf7! 12 ♘e6 was no doubt White's intention, as it is a standard pattern, familiar from games such as Fischer-Reshevsky, USA Ch, New York 1958/9. However, it doesn't work here, as Black can clear a retreat for his king without loss of time by 12...♗xc3+! (12...♔xe6?? 13 ♕d5+ ♔f6 14 ♗g5#; 12...♕e8? 13 ♘c7) 13 bxc3 ♔xe6. White has virtually nothing for the two pieces; e.g., 14 ♕d5+ ♔f6 15 ♗g5+ ♔g7.

These variations are not too complicated, yet both players in our game are rated over 2500 and missed this point. Presumably they were misled by the familiarity of the ♗xf7+ and ♘e6 pattern. While pattern recognition is a fundamental aspect of chess skill, it is also important not to assume that an idea works in all settings, and to be alert to nuances that can make a vital difference. Play continued **11...♖xf7?** (an oversight also made by IM Birnboim in an earlier game) **12 ♘e6 ♕e8 13 ♘c7 ♕d8**. Now White has at least a draw if he wants it, while taking the rook, as he did in the game, gives him good winning chances, although the game eventually ended in a draw.

208) There's plenty of hope: **31 ♖f1!** forces a won pawn ending! The main point is that White has time to play b4, crippling Black's queenside majority. Then White's kingside pawns will divert the black king, allowing the white king to destroy Black's queenside. **31...♖xf1+** (31...♔d7 32 ♖xf5 gxf5 33 b4! is a similar story) **32 ♔xf1 ♔d7** (the king must stop the f-pawn) **33 b4! ♔e6 34 h4 ♔xf6 35 g4 ♔e5 36 ♔e2 ♔f4 37 h5 gxh5 38 gxh5 ♔g5 39 ♔d3 ♔xh5 40 ♔xd4 ♔g5 41 ♔c5 1-0**.

209) 17 fxe6! (17 ♕xc5? dxc5 18 axb4 ♖xb4 19 ♖xa6 is ineffective due to 19...c4, and 17 axb4? ♖xb4 comes to the same thing) **17...♕xd4** (Black has no choice because ♕xf6+ was threatened, but now the white knight comes into play with great effect) **18 ♘xd4 fxe6 19 ♗xe6!** (this is the main point: the d7-bishop is overloaded because of the possible fork on c6) **19...bxa3** (not 19...♗xe6? 20 ♘c6+) **20 ♗xd7** (20 ♖xa3 is also good: 20...♖xb2 21 ♗xd7 ♔xd7 transposes to the note to Black's 21st move) **20...♔xd7** (20...axb2 21 ♘c6+ ♔f7 {21...♔xd7 22 ♘xb8+} 22 ♖b1 leaves Black a piece down) **21 ♖xa3 ♖g8** (21...♖xb2 22 ♖xa6 is miserable for Black, a pawn down and with passive pieces) **22 ♖xa6 ♖g4** (22...♖xg2 23 ♖a7+ ♔e8 24 b3 d5 25 ♘c6 ♗c5 26 ♖a4 is also rotten for Black) **23 ♖a7+ ♔e8 24 ♔d2** and White went on to win.

210) No, 15 ♘xd5?? fails because of a typical tactical idea that often arises when an attempt to win material leaves a fianchetto without its defensive bishop: 15...♘xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♕xd5! (not 16...b5?? 17 ♕b3) 17 ♕xe8 ♗h3 18 e4 ♕xd3 19 ♕xa8 ♕f3 and mate follows on g2.

211) 34...♕a8! pins the rook, and with ...♘e3+ fork ideas in the air, White cannot avoid disaster. The trickiest point is that 35 ♖xf2 is met by 35...♖e8!, when ...♕xd5+ or ...♘e3+ can follow in safety. The immediate 35...♕xd5+?? fails because of the back-rank mate after 36 ♕xd5 ♘e3+ 37 ♔h3 ♘xd5 38 ♖xf8#, while 35...♘e3+? 36 ♕xe3 leaves Black a pawn down.

34...♕b7?? is bad since Black has no good reply to 35 ♖xf2 ♖d8 (35...♘e3+ 36 ♔g1!) 36 ♔h3, exploiting Black's weak back rank. In the game, **34...c4?!** let White off the hook. Then 35 ♖c5 ♕a8+ 36 ♔h3 would have been his safest course.

212) 22...♖xf2! 23 ♕xf2 (23 ♔xf2?? ♗c5+) 23...♗c5 24 ♖1d4 (24 ♖7d4 ♕xc7) 24...♖e1+! (a critical idea – I hope you saw this before deciding to sacrifice, as it's an 'only' move; perhaps the pattern is familiar from the finish of the famous game R.Byrne-Fischer, USA Ch, New York 1963/4; not 24...♖f8? 25 ♖d8) 25 ♕xe1 ♕xd7 and Black regains the rook while retaining an extra pawn. In the queen ending after 26 ♗e5 ♗xd4+ 27 ♗xd4 ♕xd4+ 28 ♔f1 ♕f6+ 29 ♔g1 ♕xb2 30 ♕e6+ ♔h7 31 ♕e4+ g6 32 ♕b7+ ♕g7 33 ♕xa6 c3, Black has excellent winning chances.

In the game, Black was merely surviving after **22...♕f3? 23 ♕xf3 ♖xf3 24 ♖e1 ♖f7**.

213) 27 ♘g4! (27 ♘d5? doesn't work because after 27...♘xd5 28 ♕h8+ ♔f7 29 ♕h7+ ♔f6 30 cxd5 Black has the counterblow 30...♖e8!, when the weakness of White's back rank takes the wind completely out of his sails) **27...♘xg4** (Black loses material after 27...♖e8 28 ♕xf6+ ♕xf6 29 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 30 ♘xf6+ or 27...♔f7 28 ♘e5+) **28 ♕h8+ ♔f7 29 ♕h7+ ♔f8** (29...♔f6 30 ♕e7+ ♔f5 31 h3 leaves Black defenceless; e.g., 31...h5 32 hxg4+ ♔xg4 33 f3+ ♔g3 34 ♕g5#) **30 ♕e7+ ♔g8 31 ♖e6 1-0**. Black must lose a lot of material to avoid mate.

214) 41...♖fxg2! is the winning move, as the threat to b4 is worth nothing in view of Black's mating ideas. To understand why this is the only winning move, we need to see what is wrong with two other moves: 41...♖gxg2? leads to a draw after a sequence of 'only' moves: 42 ♕xb4+ ♔e8! 43 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 44 ♕d6! ♖c2! 45 ♕xg6+! (not 45 ♕b8+? ♖c8; 45 ♕e6+? ♔d8! 46 ♕d6+ ♔c8 47 ♕f8+ ♔c7 48 ♖h7+ ♔c6!) 45...♔d8! 46 ♕d6+! ♔e8! with a repetition (but not 46...♔c8? 47 ♕f8+ ♔c7 48 ♖h7+ ♔c6 49 ♕h6+). In the game, **41...a5?** gave White a vital tempo to activate his queen: **42 ♕e3!** (42 exf5+? ♖e2) **42...♖fxg2** (42...♖gxg2 allows White the same draw) **43 exf5+** (43 ♕c5+ also draws) **43...♔f8** (43...♔f7? loses to 44 ♕e6+ ♔f8 45 ♕d6+) **44 ♕c5+ ♔g8 45 ♕c4+ ♔f8** (45...♔g7? 46 ♕c7+ ♔f6 47 ♕d6+ leads to mate) **46 ♕c5+ ½-½**. Neither side can avoid the repetition.

Returning to 41...♖fxg2!, the variations turn out to be quite simple: 42 ♕xb4+ (with the queen still on e1, 42 exf5+ is parried by 42...♖e2+; 42 ♖h7+ ♔d8 and mate follows; 42 ♖xg2 can now be met by 42...♕xg2#) 42...♔e8! allows White no more useful checks, and 43 ♕d6 (which saved the day with a pair of rooks exchanged) now allows the simple 43...♖xg1#.

215) 41...♖xg2+! (Black must avoid 41...♕xd5?? 42 ♕xd5, 41...♘xd5?? 42 ♖xg7+ and 41...♗xd5?? 42 ♗xf6) **42**

♔**h1** (42 ♔xg2?! ♘xd5! is the main point: 43 ♖xg7+ {43 ♗xg7 ♘xe7; 43 ♕xd5? ♗xd5} 43...♕xg7 44 ♗xg7? ♘e3+ 45 ♔g1 ♘xd1 gives White an unpleasant endgame) **42...♕f8 43 d6!** (43 ♖xg7+?! ♕xg7 44 ♔xg2 ♘xd5! still works nicely) **43...♖a2 44 ♘c5** (the cavalry arrives just in time to save White) **44...♖xa3 45 ♘d7 ♕xe7 46 dxe7 ♘e8 47 ♔g1 ½-½**. 47...♗xc3 48 ♘f8+ ♔g8 49 ♕d7 ♗xf3 50 ♘e6 ♔f7 51 ♘d8+ ♔g7 52 ♘e6+ ♔f7 is one way for the game to end in a draw by repetition.

216) 39...♕xd4+!

Black correctly spurns the offered rook and goes on the offensive. Queen and knight are a powerful attacking force, and the white king has nowhere to run. Not 39...♕xg7?? 40 ♕a4! ♕xg5 (now Black is mated, but otherwise ♖h7 and/or ♕a8+ follows) 41 ♕xc6+! ♔f7 (or 41...♔d8 42 ♕a8+ ♔e7 43 ♖h7+ ♖f7 44 ♕b7+ ♔d8 45 ♖h8+) 42 ♕d7+ ♔g6 (42...♕e7 43 ♖h7+) 43 ♕h7#.

40 ♕e3 ♕b2+ 41 ♔f1 (both 41 ♔g3 ♕g2+ 42 ♔h4 ♕g4# and 41 ♔e1 ♘g2+ are trivially lost, while 41 ♔f3 ♕g2+ 42 ♔xf4 ♕g4# is a nice geometrical theme) **41...♕g2+ 42 ♔e1 ♘d3+ 43 ♔d1 ♕xh1+ 44 ♔c2 d4 0-1**

217) 25 ♗h4! ♕g7

25...g5 is the obvious reply, but fails because after 26 ♘xg5! hxg5 27 ♗xg5 Black has no good response: 27...♕g7 (27...♕xg5 28 ♖g3 might be OK for Black if he got rook and two pieces for the queen, but f7 collapses; 27...♕h8 allows 28 ♗xf7+) 28 ♖g3! ♘h5 (or 28...♘g6 29 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 30 ♗xf7+! ♕xf7 31 ♖xg6+ ♗g7 32 ♘xc5! and Black's position falls apart) 29 ♖dd3! leaves Black too tied up to save his pieces; e.g., 29...♘xg3 30 ♖xg3 ♔h8 31 ♗xd8 ♕h7 32 ♗xf7.

26 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 27 g3!

White has won a clear exchange, but the pain doesn't end there for Black, as the pressure on the d-file and against f7 cause further losses: **27...♘xh3+ 28 ♔g2 ♖e8** (or 28...♘g5 29 ♘xg5 hxg5 30 ♖f3 with a disaster on f7) **29 ♖cd3 ♘f6 30 ♖d8 ♗e7 31 ♖xe8+ ♘xe8 32 ♕b8 1-0**.

218) 13 ♖h4! h6 (there's no other way to protect h7, and 13...♘c6 14 ♘xh7 ♕xh4 15 gxh4 ♔xh7 gives Black far too little material for the queen) **14 ♗d5+!** (not 14 ♗xb7? hxg5 15 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 16 ♗xa8, which is at best unclear) **14...e6** (14...♔h8 gives White a pleasant choice between 15 ♗xb7 and 15 ♘f3!) **15 ♘xe6! ♗xe6 16 ♖f4!** (Black is doomed by pins) **16...♗xd5** (16...♕e7 17 ♖e4 {17 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 18 ♗xb7 is also good} 17...♖f6 18 ♕e1 is also hopeless for Black) **17 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 18 cxd5 ♘d7 19 ♕c2** and White won easily.

219) The two moves White wants to play are ♖g3 and e6+, followed by smashing through on f5 or g6. Only one move-order works; let's see why 30 e6+! is correct by looking first at the sequence chosen in the game, which allows Black a miracle defence: **30 ♖g3?** (lining up for a knockout blow with e6+) **30...♘d3** forces **31 ♗d4** due to the threats against b2 and f2. It might look as if Black's knight incursion is just a minor inconvenience, but **31...c5!** shows otherwise. The bishop mustn't move from d4, and 32 dxc6 ♕e6!, physically preventing e6+, shows the main point of Black's defence. After 33 cxd7 (33 ♖xd3?! cxd3 34 cxd7 ♖ad8 leaves White's pieces suddenly looking

misplaced) 33...♘xe1 34 ♕h4 ♘d3 35 ♖h3 (threatening ♘xf5+) 35...♘c5! 36 ♘xf5+ ♖xf5 37 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 38 ♗xc5+ bxc5 39 ♕h8+ ♕g8 the game is likely to be drawn. In the game, **32 ♖xd3 cxd3 33 ♗c3 c4** (33...♖ae8?! 34 g4!?) **34 e6+** (34 g4? ♕a3!) **34...♘f6** left White in danger of being worse. After the accurate 35 d6! ♕xd6 36 ♕h4 (threatening ♘xf5+) 36...d2 (36...♕e7 37 ♕g5 ♔h8 38 ♘f7+ ♔g7 39 ♘h6 with a draw by repetition) 37 ♘xf5+ gxf5 38 ♕g5+ ♔h8 39 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 40 ♕xf6+ ♔g8 he must be satisfied with perpetual check.

30 e6+! avoids that defensive idea, and wins outright: 30...♘f6 (30...♖f6 31 ♕h4) 31 ♖g3 (threatening ♘xf5+) 31...♔h8 (31...♘d3 is now an irrelevance: 32 ♘xf5+ ♔h8 33 ♘xe7 ♘f2+ 34 ♔g1 ♘xh3+ 35 ♖xh3) 32 ♖xg6 ♘d3 33 ♕h4 ♘xb2 (33...♘xe1 34 ♖xf6; 33...♘f2+ 34 ♔g1) 34 ♘xf5 followed by ♖xf6.

220) 31...♔h8! is strong, as White is fighting to survive in view of the idea of ...f3. 32 ♖xd8 f3! (32...♖xd8? loses to 33 ♖xe5!) 33 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 34 g3 fxe2 35 ♗c3 ♗b4 36 h4! ♕g6 37 h5 (37 ♕c8+? ♕g8 38 ♕f5 ♕d8) 37...♗xc3 38 hxg6 e1♕+ 39 ♔g2 ♕e4+ 40 ♔h2 ♕xg6 41 c5 and the c-pawn may provide enough counterplay to save White.

After **31...♔g7?**, as played in the game, 32 ♖d7+! would have given Black problems. The main point is that 32...♔h8? loses to 33 ♖xe5! (but not 33 ♖xd8? f3!), so Black must opt for 32...♖xd7 33 ♕xd7+ ♖f7, when White has time to cover f3 by 34 ♕g4 or 34 ♕d3, leaving him with all the chances.

221) 37...♔h6!

The main threat is ...e3, while ...♖f3 is also an important idea. 37...e3?! 38 fxe3 ♖f3 39 ♕d4 and 37...♖f3?! 38 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 39 ♕xd5 are both far less clear-cut; in the latter case, 39...♖ef4?? 40 ♕xb7+ ♔h6 41 ♖c6 shows why it is useful to tuck the king away on h6.

38 ♔g2

38 ♖c8 e3 39 fxe3 ♖f3 40 ♕c2 (spot the threat!) gives Black several winning options, including the simple 40...♘e7. After 38 ♖c5 e3 39 fxe3 ♖f3 40 ♖xd5 ♖g3+ 41 ♔h2 ♖xd5 the queen is overloaded in view of 42 ♕xd5 ♕f2+ 43 ♔h1 ♖h3#.

38...♖f3 (38...e3 is also good) **39 ♖e3** (39 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 40 ♕xd5 ♖ef4 41 ♕d2 ♕e5 and there is no good answer to the threat of ...♕e4) **39...♘xe3+ 0-1**

222) 28 ♗d3+! forces mate: 28...♔e6 (28...♔g4 29 ♕f3+ ♔h3 30 g4+ and 31 ♕h3#) 29 ♕e8+ (29 f5+? ♔e7 gives White nothing) 29...♗e7 (29...♔d5 30 ♕xf7+ is similar) 30 f5+! ♔d5 31 ♕xf7+ and now:

a) 31...♔d4 32 ♖e4+ ♔c5 33 ♕c4+ ♔b6 34 ♕a6+ ♔c5 35 ♕b5#.

b) 31...♔c5 32 ♕c4+ ♔b6 33 ♕a6+ ♔c5 34 ♕b5+ ♔d4 35 ♖e4#.

c) 31...♔c6 32 ♗e4+ ♔b6 33 ♕b3+ ♔a5 34 ♕a3+ ♔b5 35 ♖b3+ ♔c4 36 ♕b4#.

Other moves fail to mate, and therefore lose: 28 ♕e4+? ♔e6 leaves the king safe. 28 g4+? ♔g6 29 ♕e4+ ♔g7 and White can resign. The game ended **28 ♗xd7+? ♖xd7 29 g4+ ♕xg4 30 ♕e4+ ♔e6 31 f5+ ♕xf5 0-1**.

223) 36...♖xf3!

Dragging the white king out into the open, and setting up some tactics against White's rook. 36...♕c3?! 37 ♕xf6+ ♕xf6 38 ♖xf6 ♔xf6 doesn't give Black real winning chances in view of the opposite-coloured bishops. 36...♗d8?! 37 ♕d7 c3 38 ♖c6 is a

slightly better try, as the queens stay on the board, but White should hold.

37 ♔xf3 (37 ♖xb6 ♖xf2+ 38 ♔xf2 ♕xb6+ is a rotten queen ending for White, since he is a pawn down with much the more exposed king; 37 ♖xg6+ ♔xg6 38 ♕g5+ ♔h7 will leave Black a piece up) **37...♕xd5+ 38 ♖e4 ♗d4!** (the key move, as it leaves White's pieces crippled) **39 ♔g2 c3 40 f3** (White has unpinned and protected his rook, and thus freed his queen, but in the meantime Black's c-pawn has become a monster) **40...c2 41 ♕a3** and now Black overcomplicated matters by playing **41...♕b5?**, which even jeopardized victory. 41...♗f6!, threatening ...♕d2+, is the cleanest win: 42 ♕c1 ♕d1 43 ♖e1 ♕xe1! 44 ♕xe1 ♗b2 and ...c1♕ is the *quietus*.

224) There is no subtlety needed, as Black simply bulldoze through White's defences: **26...♗xb3! 27 cxb3** (27 axb3 a4 also gives Black a decisive attack on the a-file; 27 ♘e2 gives Black a choice of wins, including 27...♗xc2+ 28 ♔xc2 ♗e1+; he also wins after 27 ♕d3 ♗xa2+ 28 ♔xa2 a4 intending ...b3+) **27...a4 28 ♗c4** (28 bxa4 b3 and 28 ♘e2 axb3 29 ♘xc3 bxc3 are both hopeless for White) **28...axb3 29 ♗xb3 ♖xa2!** (the cascade of sacrifices continues) **30 ♗xa2** (30 ♔xa2 ♕a5+ 31 ♔b1 ♕a1+ 32 ♔c2 ♗e1+! 33 ♔d3 ♕a6+ leads to mate) **30...b3! 31 ♗xb3 ♕a3 32 ♔c2 ♕b2+ 33 ♔d3 ♗a5!** (finally a quiet move, and a nice one too) **34 ♗c4 ♖xc4! 35 ♘e2** (35 ♔xc4 ♕c2+ 36 ♔b5 ♕c5+ and mate on b4 or b6, thanks to the well-placed bishop – the key point in a remarkable forcing sequence) **35...♕c2+ 36 ♔e3 ♗b6+ 0-1**.

225) 26...♘g5! is a superficially obvious move, but Naiditsch had no doubt analysed 27 f4 exf3 28 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 29 ♗xg5(?), when 29...hxg5? 30 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 31 ♕h6+ ♔g8 32 f6 ♕f8 33 ♕g6+ ♔h8 34 ♗xf7 is winning for White – Black is paralysed, while White plans ♔f2, h6 and ♕g7+. However, 29...♔h7!! launches a very strong counterattack (if you saw this, you have solved the puzzle). Black intends ...♕e2, and ...♖g8 is coming in many lines. It is very hard to see this idea back on move 26, as the vital pawn is at that point nowhere near f3. Then 30 ♗xh6 will give White just two pawns for the piece, and insufficient counterplay, while after 30 ♗f4 ♕e2 31 ♕h3 f2+ 32 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 33 ♕f1 ♖e8 34 ♖d1 ♘d5 35 ♗d2 ♕e4+ 36 ♔h2 (after 36 ♕g2 ♕e2 White's position disintegrates) 36...♘f6 Black has the decisive threat of ...♘g4+. Another typical line, 30 ♗h4 ♕e3+ 31 ♔h1 ♖g8 32 ♕h3 d5, gives Black a firm grip on the position; e.g., 33 f6 ♕e4 34 ♖c1 ♔h8 35 ♗c2 ♕e2 36 ♕f1 ♕e6 37 ♕f2 ♘c4, while 30 ♗f6 is also met by 30...♕e3+ 31 ♔h1 ♖g8 32 ♕h4 d5.

After 26...♘g5! 27 f4 exf3 28 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8, White's best try is 29 ♖e1 ♕d8 30 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 31 ♕xg5+ hxg5 32 ♖e7, but it is clear he is fighting for a draw.

In the game, **26...♔h8?** completely failed to challenge White's idea: **27 ♗xf7 ♖e7 28 ♗g6 ♕f8 29 ♗xh7?!** (29 ♖xe4!? or 29 ♕h4 keeps good chances) **29...♖xh7 30 ♖xe4 ♘c4 31 ♗f4 ♕f7?** (31...♖g7 is better) **32 ♖e6 ♖f8?! 33 ♖g6 ♕d5?! 34 ♗xh6 ♖xf5 35 ♖e1! ♕f7 36 ♕xf5 1-0**.

226) Debashis – Joshi

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

White's development advantage is so large that he should be looking for a

forced win – if you didn't realize this, consider whether a Morphy or a Tal would have dreamt of playing a quiet move in such a position!

16 ♖he1! does the trick. The main point is that after 16...♕xc3 17 ♖xe6+! White forces mate: 17...dxe6 18 ♕xc6+ ♔f7 19 ♕c7+ or 17...♔f8 18 ♕xf5+, etc. That leaves Black scrambling to find an acceptable move, but there is none: 16...♕c7 17 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 18 ♗xe6 or 16...♕c5 17 ♖xe6+ dxe6 18 ♘e4, while after 16...♕b8 almost anything works; e.g., 17 ♖xe6+ dxe6 18 ♖d8+ ♔f7 19 ♕xf5+ ♘f6 20 h6! ♖xd8 21 hxg7.

Instead, 16 h6?! ♗f6 is merely advantageous for White. He actually chose **16 ♖d3?**, but in a position like this, one should not make a passive move so lightly. After **16...♗h6 17 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 18 a3 ♖b6 19 ♖e3 ♕f6 20 ♕f4**, 20...♘g4 would not have been too bad for Black.

227) Berczes – Janković
Sarajevo 2010

31 ♘e5+! wins on the spot: 31...fxe5 (31...♕xe5 32 ♗d3+ ♗e4 33 ♗xe4+) 32 ♗d3+ e4 33 ♖xe4! and Black is defenceless because 33...♗xe4 allows 34 ♗xe4+ ♔h5 35 ♕xh7#.

In the game, White chose **31 ♘f2?**, and was winning after **31...♖e8? 32 ♗d3+ f5 33 ♕d7**, but 31...♖f8! is a lot more resilient. Although 32 ♗d3+ f5 33 ♖ac1 (threatening ♖xc6+) 33...♖f7 34 ♖e6+ ♗xe6 35 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 36 ♖xc6 favours White, this is a far cry from the clear-cut win he could have had.

228) Caruana – Hou Yifan
New Delhi 2011

38 h4!

The king needs both h2 and h3. After 38 ♖c1? ♖ee2 (38...♖c2? 39 ♖d1 b2 40 b7 ♖b8 41 a5 ♖c1 42 ♖f1) 39 ♖e5!? ♖xg2+ 40 ♔f1 ♖gf2+ 41 ♔e1 ♖fc2 42 ♖d1 ♖c8 43 b7 ♖b8 Black should hold, while 38 h3? ♖ee2 39 ♖e5 ♖xg2+ 40 ♔f1 ♖gf2+ 41 ♔e1 ♖fc2 42 ♖xc2 bxc2 43 ♖c5 (43 ♔d2 ♖xa4 44 ♖b5 ♖c4 45 ♔c1 ♖c8) 43...♖xa4 44 ♖xc2 ♖b4 is drawn.

38...♖ee2 (or 38...♖c2 39 ♖c7 ♖ee2 40 ♔h1 ♖xg2 41 ♖xc2 bxc2 42 ♖c5 ♖d2 43 a5) **39 ♔h2 ♖xg2+ 40 ♔h3** and now White wins easily as his king can escape the checks by running up the board and to the queenside: **40...♖h2+ 41 ♔g3 ♖hg2+ 42 ♔f4 ♖gf2+ 43 ♔e5 g6** (43...♖fe2+ 44 ♔d6 ♖ad2+ 45 ♔c7) **44 ♔f6! ♖ac2 45 ♖xc2 bxc2 46 b7 1-0**.

229) N. Abasov – Rukavina
Sarajevo 2010

The straightforward 24 d6! exf4 25 dxc7 gives White a decisive advantage: 25...♖e8 (25...♗c6? 26 ♖d8+; 25...♖c8 26 ♖d6) 26 ♘d5 ♘xd5 27 ♖xd5 ♗c8 28 ♗c4.

In the game, White was tempted by a flashier move that yields little: **24 ♕xf7+? ♔xf7 25 d6+** and now Black's best course would have been 25...♗e6 26 ♗xe6+ ♔xe6 27 dxc7 ♖c8 28 ♘b5 ♘d5 29 c4 ♘xc7 30 ♖d6+ ♔e7 31 ♖b6 ♘xb5 32 ♖xb5 ♔d6, with a likely draw in this rook ending.

A very similar type of error was made in the game Bellon-Nunn, Zurich 1984, which you may wish to look up to reinforce the lesson contained in this puzzle.

230) A. Gupta – Paciencia
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

24 ♖xc8! (24 ♘f6+? is the wrong move-order: 24...♕xf6 25 ♖xc8 ♗xc8! leaves White worse because 26 axb3? loses to 26...♕xd4, and 26 ♖f4 is met by 26...♘d4!) **24...♘xd4 25 ♘f6+!**

(without this follow-up, White would be worse) **25...♔f8** (or: 25...♕xf6 26 ♖xe8#; 25...gxf6 26 ♕g4+ and ♖xd8; 25...♔h8 26 ♕d3 ♕xc8 {26...gxf6 27 ♖xd8} 27 ♕xh7#) **26 ♘xh7+ ♔g8 27 ♘f6+ ♔f8 28 exd4! 1-0**. White emerges two pawns up in a simple ending after 28...♗xc8 (28...♖xe2? 29 ♖xd8+ ♔e7 30 ♖e8+) 29 ♕xe8+ ♕xe8 30 ♘xe8 ♔xe8.

231) Mazur – Yordanova
Banska Štiavnica 2010

The solution is uncomplicated: 35 exf5! ♖xf5 (otherwise 36 ♖xh5 wins) 36 ♕d3 (not 36 ♕e4? d5) and White wins a whole rook because 36...♕f6 allows 37 ♖xh5+.

The main point here was to avoid the natural **35 ♖xh5?**, as chosen in the game. Then 35...♗xh3! would have been a very unpleasant surprise, as Black wins. 36 ♖xh6+ ♖xh6 is an immediate disaster for White, while after 36 ♔xh3 ♖f3+ 37 ♔h4 ♖8f4+ 38 ♖g4 ♖h3+! 39 ♔xh3 ♕xh5+ 40 ♔g3 ♕xg4+ Black liquidates to a won pawn ending. That leaves 36 ♖xh3 ♖f2+ 37 ♖g2 (37 ♕xf2 ♖xf2+ 38 ♖g2 ♖xg2+ 39 ♔xg2 ♕xh3+ is a lost pawn ending for White) 37...♖xe2 38 ♖xh6+ ♔xh6 39 ♖xe2 with a dreadful rook ending for White, as he is a pawn down with weaknesses and unable to activate his king without an exchange of rooks.

232) Solodovnichenko – Delchev
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

33 gxf6! (not fearing the discovered check, as White's threats are stronger) **33...d3+** (I hope you looked carefully at this move, as only one of White's king moves in reply is good enough to win; 33...♖e3 doesn't help, as White mates after 34 fxg7+ ♔xg7 35 f6+ ♔f8 36 ♕h5) **34 ♔f1!** (avoiding both the long diagonal and the second rank; 34 ♔h1?? loses after 34...dxc2 35 ♕h5 ♗xd5+, while 34 ♔h2? ♖e2+ 35 ♔g3 ♖e3 is good for Black, and 34 ♔g2? is no more than unclear after 34...♖e2+ or 34...♗xd5) **34...♗xd5** (the key line is 34...dxc2 35 ♕h5! cxd1♕+ 36 ♖xd1 gxf6 37 ♕h8+ ♔e7 38 ♖e1+ ♔d7 39 ♕xe8+ ♔c7 40 ♖e7#) **35 ♕xd3** (not 35 ♕xd5? dxc2) **35...♖e5 36 ♖xb5 1-0**

233) I.J. Mason – Vachtfeidl
British Corr. Ch 2010-11

It's a straightforward king-hunt!

23...♖xe3+! 24 ♔xe3 ♕b6+ 25 ♔f4

If you saw that this king move was forced, then this was surely a clue that you were thinking along the right lines. The fact that Black can seal off the king's retreat clinches matters. 25 ♔d3 invites 25...♖d8+, while after 25 ♔e2 ♕xb2+ 26 ♔e3 ♕b6+ 27 ♔e2 ♗xa1 28 ♖xa1 ♕b2+ Black wins material.

25...♕f2! 26 ♖ae1

26 ♖ad1 ♖e8 27 ♖d5 ♖e6 28 e5 ♕xg2 leaves White facing threats including ...♗xe5+ and ...♕xh1, while after 26 ♖af1 g5+ 27 ♔f5 ♕xg2 28 h3 ♖e8 29 f4 ♖e6 (threatening ...♖f6+) 30 e5 gxf4 31 ♖hg1 ♖xe5+ 32 ♔xf4 ♕h2+ Black makes decisive material gains. Or 26 ♕c6 ♖b8 27 b4 (preventing ...♖b3 or ...♖xb2; 27 ♖af1 ♕d2+ 28 ♔g3 ♕g5+ 29 ♔h3 ♕h5+ 30 ♔g3 ♗e5+ 31 f4 ♖b3+ wins for Black) 27...g5+ 28 ♔f5 ♕h4 29 g4 ♕f2 30 ♖hf1 ♕d4, weaving a mating-net.

26...♖e8 27 e5 ♕xg2 28 h4 g5+ 29 ♔e4 ♗xe5 30 ♕c6 ♖e7! 31 hxg5 ♗f4+ 32 ♔d3 ♕d2+ 0-1

White loses his queen.

234) A. David – Yakovenko
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

Did you think you were searching for a way to draw? In fact, Black wins!

After **44...♗xd6!** (44...♕d2? 45 ♖xc5 and 44...♕xc3? 45 ♕xc3 both lead to miserable endings for Black) **45 ♖xc2 bxc2** it turns out that White cannot stop the pawn: **46 ♕c6** (46 ♗xd6 ♖xd6! 47 ♕c3 also fails to halt the pawn in view of 47...♖d3+!, while 46 ♕e3 can be met by 46...♗a3!? 47 ♕xa3 ♖d1 and ...c1♕) **46...♖c7** (an easy move to miss in advance, as the rook is protected by a 'ghost' of a bishop) **0-1**. The pawn queens after 47 ♕xd6 ♖c8! and ...c1♕.

235) Ding Liren – Wang Hao

Chinese League 2011

It is clear that **31 ♖xf7+!** is a forcing move, but I hope you saw the key ♖e6 follow-up idea before choosing it. 31 ♖1e5? creates the strong threat of ♖xg5+, but Black survives by 31...♕b6 32 ♕xb6 (the double check 32 ♖xg5++ is toothless) 32...axb6 33 ♖f5 ♖gf8 34 ♗d3, when a draw is likely.

31...♔xf7 32 ♕xa7+ ♔f8 (32...♔g6 33 ♗d3+ and mate next move) **33 ♖e6!** (neatly exploiting the fact that Black's pieces are getting in each other's way) **1-0**. After 33...♕f7 34 ♕c5+ ♔g7 White wins the black queen and the game.

236) Swayams – R. Singh

Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

White should strike immediately. 30 ♘xf5! wins: 30...♗f4 (30...gxf5 31 ♖xf5 ♖e1+ 32 ♖f1+) 31 ♘xe7 (31 ♖xf4 ♖e1+ 32 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 33 ♔xf1 gxf5 34 ♖f3 is also good) 31...♖xe7 32 ♖hf3, winning material.

Other sacrifices miss the target. 30 ♘xh5? is strongly met by 30...♖e3!, when the h5-knight becomes the hunted, rather than the hunter. In the game, **30 ♕g5?** gave Black several ways to defend comfortably, leaving him better due to his superior structure. 30...♖e1! is safe and probably best; e.g., 31 ♘xh5 (31 ♘xf5 ♗f4 32 ♕xh5+ gxh5 33 ♘d6+ ♔g7 34 ♘xf7 ♔xf7) 31...♖xf1+ 32 ♔xf1 (32 ♗xf1 gxh5 33 ♗d3 ♖e1+ 34 ♔f2 ♖e4) 32...♕e6.

237) Lev – Axelrod

Israeli Team Ch 2010

The accurate move 36 ♗f5! wins on the spot: 36...♖xg2+ (36...♖c7 37 ♗xe6+) 37 ♔xg2 ♖c2+ 38 ♔h1 (38 ♗xc2?? ♗h3+) 38...♖c1+ 39 ♔h2 and Black runs out of ideas.

Other moves are far less impressive: 36 ♗h7+?! ♔f8 37 ♕xg7+ ♔e8 38 ♕d4 is good for White, but much less incisive. 36 ♖xe6?? loses to 36...♖xg2+! 37 ♔xg2 ♖g1+. **36 ♗xh5?**, as chosen in the game, is also met by a nasty surprise: **36...♖xg2+! 37 ♔xg2 ♗h3+ 38 ♖xh3** (38 ♔xh3?? ♕xh6) **38...♕xh6 39 ♗f7+** and now 39...♔h7 is safest: 40 ♗g8+ ♔g6 (40...♔xg8 41 ♖xh6 ♘f5 42 ♖e8+ ♔f7 43 ♖hh8 is another possibility) 41 ♗f7+ ♔h7 leads to a draw.

238) D. Petrosian – Grandelius

Sarajevo 2010

An unwillingness to give up the queen, even for far more than sufficient material, is a common cause of error. 23...♕xf5! 24 ♖xf5 ♖xb2 gives Black way too much for the queen, and White has no meaningful counterthreats. Despite the simplicity of the correct path, Black went wrong with **23...♕h6?**, when White would have been no worse after 24 ♖xg7+! ♕xg7 (24...♔xg7? loses to 25 e6+ ♖xb2 26 ♕e5+ ♔g8 27 ♖g5+) 25 ♕xd2 dxc4 26 ♗d5+ ♔h8 27 ♗c3. Instead he lost by **24 ♕g4? ♖xb2 25 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 26 ♗xd5+ ♖f7!** (the only move, but good enough!) **27 ♖xf7 ♕xh2+! 0-1**. 28 ♔xh2 ♘f3++ and 29...♖h2#.

239) J. Mohammad – Swayams
Commonwealth Ch, Delhi 2010

Black secures the advantage by 16...♘xe4! 17 ♗xe4 (17 ♖xe4 ♗f6) 17...f5! (this follow-up is vital since 17...♗f6?! 18 ♗xh7+ is less clear), and now:

a) 18 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 19 ♘bd2 (19 g4? ♖xd5) 19...♗f6 20 ♖b1 ♘xd5 is excellent for Black since 21 g4? fails to 21...♘c3 22 ♕c2 ♖xf3 23 ♘xf3 ♗g6.

b) 18 ♗c2 ♗f6 19 ♗xf5 (19 ♗g5 ♗xg5 gives Black a very healthy extra pawn) 19...♗xa1 (19...♗xf3 20 ♕xf3 ♗xa1 is also good) 20 ♗e6+ ♔h8 21 ♘bd2 and White can hope for some activity for the exchange, but it is far from sufficient.

16...♘fxd5?! is a less effective attempt to exploit the same theme: 17 exd5 ♗f6 18 ♘c3 b4 (18...♗xc3? 19 ♕d3) 19 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 (19...♔xh7?! 20 ♘g5+) 20 ♘e4 ♗xa1 21 ♗f5 and Black's vulnerable kingside means White has at least enough compensation for the exchange. Black missed his chance by playing **16...♘fd7?! 17 ♗b2 ♗f6 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 19 ♘bd2 ♘e5**, when he had a merely satisfactory position. The game later ended in a draw.

240) P. Gelis – Bi. Cheng
Canadian Junior Ch, Toronto 2010

After **31...♕xe7! 32 ♕xe7 gxh2** there's no way for White to halt the black pawns: **33 ♗xg4 hxg4 34 ♘f2** (34 ♕h4 g3!) **34...g3 35 ♕d6 gxf2 36 ♕xd5+ ♔h7 37 ♕xe4+ ♗f5 38 ♕xf3 ♗g6 39 ♕h3+ ♗h6 40 ♕f1 ♗e4 0-1**.

Actually, there was little choice for Black, as 31...♔f7?? 32 ♘xc8+, followed by ♕xg3, and 31...♔h7? 32 ♕xg3 ♗h6 (32...♕xe7 33 ♗xg4) 33 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 34 ♕c7 ♕g7 35 ♔c2 offer him no real hope.

241) Naiditsch – Vachier-Lagrave
French Team Ch, Mulhouse 2011

25 ♗b6!

White wins material thanks to the pins on the d- and e-files. Other attempts to do so fail: 25 c3? provides Black with the defence 25...♗e5 26 ♖xd5 exd5 now that White can't play ♗c3. 25 ♖e4? doesn't work because 25...♗e5 26 ♖xd5 exd5 attacks the rook. And not 25 ♗c3? ♗xc3, hitting the e1-rook.

25...e5

25...♗xb6 allows 26 ♖xd5 – the bishop was pinned against a pin! After 25...♗e5 26 ♖xd5 exd5 27 ♗d4 the pin on the e-file now claims the bishop.

26 ♖xd4! 1-0

Again accuracy is needed – taking with the rook is the only way to win a whole piece. After 26 ♗xd4? ♖ed8 Black regains the bishop, while 26 c3?! ♔b7 27 ♗a5 ♗f2 28 ♖xd5 ♗xe1 is merely a very good ending for White.

242) Rublevsky – I. Sokolov
Poikovsky 2010

The solution depends on one exceptional idea (see line 'b' below). 26 ♖xc6! ♕xc6 (26...d2 27 ♖xc7+ ♔b6 28 ♖7c6+ ♕xc6 29 ♖xc6+ ♔xc6 30 ♕c3+ neutralizes Black's passed pawn) 27 ♖xc6 is very good for White because his a-pawn is at least as dangerous as Black's d-pawn. The white queen supplies deft touches in several lines:

a) 27...d2 28 ♖xc7+ ♔b6 (28...♔xc7 29 ♕c3+) 29 ♕g3 (29 ♖c6+ is also good) 29...d1♕+ 30 ♖c1 ♕d7 31 ♕b8+ ♕b7 32 a8♘+!? ♔a6 33 ♕xh8 and White wins.

b) 27...♔xc6 is strongly met by the highly striking 28 ♕xh7!! ♖ee8 (not 28...♖xh7? 29 a8♕+, nor 28...♖he8?? 29 ♕xe4+ ♖xe4 30 a8♕+) 29 ♕xg7, and now:

b1) 29...♖hf8 30 ♗d4 ♔b7 (30...d2? 31 ♕h6+) 31 ♗e3 and with the black pawn halted and White's supported, Black's prospects are grim.

b2) 29...♖hg8 30 ♕xf7 and now the line 30...♗f1 31 ♕c4+ ♔d7 32 ♕d5+ ♔e7 33 g4! is indicative of Black's problems.

b3) 29...♖xh2 30 ♕c3+ ♔b7 31 ♕b4+ ♔a8 (forced) 32 ♗e5! is very awkward for Black.

The game turned quickly in Black's favour: **26 ♕d7? ♕d6 27 ♕f5** (27 ♕xc6+ ♕xc6 28 ♖xc6 d2 works well for Black now that the white queen is out of the picture) **27...♖f4! 28 ♕e5 ♕xe5 29 ♖xe5 ♖d8 30 ♗c3 d2 31 ♗xd2 ♖xd2 32 f3 ♖f6 33 ♖e1 ♗a6 0-1**.

243) Svidler – Gelfand
Astrakhan 2010

After **22 ♗xd4! ♗xd4** (acceptance leads to disaster, but otherwise Black has simply lost a pawn, and must also deal with the threat of ♘xg6+ in any case) **23 ♘xg6+! ♔g7 24 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 25 ♕h6+ ♔e7** the material balance is not necessarily in White's favour, so you needed to have assessed this position correctly. White has a decisive attack: **26 c3 ♗f6 27 ♖fe1** (Black has no good way to keep lines closed) **27...f4** (27...♘e6 28 ♕xh7+ ♘g7 {28...♔d8 29 ♕f7 and Black loses material} 29 exf5+ ♔d8 30 ♕h6 ♕xf5 31 d4 and the threat of ♗b1 leaves Black's position creaking) **28 d4** (now the threat is to play e5, and there is little to be done about it) **28...♘e6** (28...♗e6 fares no better; a convincing sample line is 29 e5 dxe5 30 dxe5 ♗xe5 {30...♗h8 31 ♕xh7+} 31 ♖ad1! ♖g8 {31...♗xa2 32 ♕d6+} 32 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 33 ♕xh7+ ♖g7 34 ♕f5 with a collapse on the e-file) **29 e5 dxe5 30 ♕xh7+ ♔d8 31 ♕f7 1-0**. Black's pieces prove too loose after 31...♗e7 32 ♖xe5.

Chapter 7

244) The winning move is 32 ♗f4!!, but to understand why, we need to look first at the game continuation. After **32 ♕d6?? dxe3** the black bishop was able to help fight against the white pawns, and Black had a useful asset in his e-pawn. After **33 ♕d8+ ♕e8 34 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8**, Black went on to win easily, as 35 ♖b1 (threatening ♖b8) can be met by either 35...♗e5 or 35...e2!.

Playing 32 ♗f4!! decisively improves White's position by ruling out Black's key defensive ideas. After 32...♕xf4 (otherwise White wins in straightforward fashion thanks to his powerful c-pawn), 33 ♕d6 is strong now that the black queen cannot be conveniently defended:

a) 33...♗d2? 34 ♕d8+ ♖xd8 35 cxd8♕#.

b) 33...♕f6 34 ♕d7 ♕e6 35 ♕d8+ ♕e8 transposes to line 'c'.

c) 33...♕e4 34 ♕d8+ ♕e8 35 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8 36 ♖b1 ♗b4 (because the pawn is still on d4, Black cannot play the bishop to e5) 37 a3 ♖c8 38 axb4 ♖xc7 (38...♔f8 39 b5 and the pawns run through) 39 b5 ♖xc5 40 b6 ♖c8 41 b7 ♖b8 42 ♖c1 and Black is doomed by the weak back rank problem that White's precise play denied him time to solve.

d) 33...g5 is relatively best, but after 34 ♕d8+ ♔g7 (34...♖xd8 35 cxd8♕+ ♔g7 is similar) 35 ♕xc8 d3 (intending ...♗e5, so White doesn't have time to take a second queen) 36 ♕f5 ♕xc7 Black is a clear exchange down and should lose.

Other moves fail to win. 32 ♗xd4? ♗xd4 33 ♕d6 (33 ♖d1? ♕g3+ 34 ♕g2

♕xg2+ 35 ♔xg2 ♗f6) 33...h6 and 32 ♖d1? h6 should lead to a draw.

245) Yes, 16 ♘g5! makes use of the earlier advance of the h-pawn and the queen's position on d3. Then 16...g6? loses to 17 ♘xe6! fxe6 18 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 19 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 20 ♕g6+ ♔h8 21 ♕h5+ ♔g8 22 ♗h6, while 16...♗xg5 17 hxg5 is perhaps the most resilient, but leaves White better on both wings and able to win a useful pawn. The critical line is 16...hxg5 17 hxg5:

a) 17...g6? allows an idea that is vital for the sacrifice's soundness: 18 g4! ♔g7 19 ♖h7+! ♔xh7 20 ♕h3+ (without the queen on the third rank, this would be impossible and the attack a move too slow) 20...♔g7 21 ♕h6+ ♔g8 22 ♖h1 and mate next move.

b) 17...f5 18 exf6 ♘xf6 (18...♗xf6? loses to 19 ♕h7+ ♔f7 20 ♕h5+! g6 {20...♔e7 21 ♗b4+} 21 ♕h7+ ♗g7 22 ♖h6 ♕e7 23 ♖xg6 ♖g8 24 ♖c3) 19 gxf6 ♗xf6 (19...♖xf6 20 ♗f4 gives White a huge positional plus and ongoing attacking chances) 20 ♗b4 and White wins an exchange; e.g., 20...♗e7? 21 ♕h7+ ♔f7 22 ♖h6 ♗xb4 23 ♕g6+ ♔g8 24 ♖ch1.

Instead White chose **16 a3?** and after **16...♖e8** the chance was gone.

246) 8 dxe5! works well because the white queen can exploit the looseness in Black's position and his king's exposure. 8...♗xe5? loses a piece due to 9 ♗xc6, while after 8...♗c5 9 ♗xc4 ♘ge7 10 ♘g5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xf7 ♘xf7 12 ♕h5 White keeps a clear extra pawn. The more complex 8...♘xe5 9 ♘xe5! ♗xe5 (9...♗xb5? 10 ♕d5! costs Black a piece) 10 ♕d5! gives Black a choice of unpleasant options: 10...f6 11 ♗xc4 ♕e7 12 ♕xb7 ♖d8 13 ♘c3 is rotten for Black, while 10...♗f6 11 ♕xb7 (11 e5? c6) 11...♗xb5 (11...♖b8? 12 ♗xd7+) 12 ♕xb5+ ♕d7 13 ♕xc4 leaves White a solid pawn ahead. That leaves 10...♗d6 11 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12 e5 ♗e7 13 ♕xb7 (often such a raid to grab a pawn would have some risks, but Black is in no position to counterattack here; indeed, the queen gains time on the rook) 13...♖d8 14 ♘c3, when White has an excellent position quite apart from the fact that he will be a pawn or two up.

Other moves fail to exploit Black's carelessness. 8 ♗xc6? ♗xc6 9 dxe5 (or 9 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♕xd1 11 ♖xd1 ♗xe4) 9...♗c5 and 8 ♘xe5? ♘xe5 9 dxe5 ♗xb5 10 exd6 ♕xd6 give White little, while in the game **8 d5? ♘ce7 9 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10 ♘bd2 ♘f6 11 ♕e2 ♘g6** left Black with no real problems.

247) Yes, he could. 16 ♘g6! is both surprising and very strong: 16...♗xf4 (16...♗xg6 17 ♖xe6+ ♔f7 18 ♗xd6 and 19 ♖e7+; after 16...♕d7 17 ♘xh8 ♗xf4 18 bxc5 ♘c8 19 g4 the knight on h8 is far from being a dead piece) 17 ♖xe6+ ♔f7 (17...♔d8 18 ♘xh8 ♔d7?! 19 ♕e1 is another line where the h8-knight cannot be corralled) 18 ♖e7+ ♕xe7 19 ♘xe7 ♔xe7 gives Black a lot of pieces for the queen, but after 20 ♕e2+ ♔f7 21 ♕e4 he cannot coordinate his forces without shedding some material.

Instead, 16 ♘xc6? ♗xf4 17 ♖xe6+ ♔f8 18 bxc5 ♘d7 19 ♘cd4 ♗f7 is unclear, while 16 g4? fxe5 17 bxc5 ♗xc5 18 ♗xe5 ♕f7 also gives White little.

248) 37 ♘xe5!

Black can't ignore the knight, as 38 ♘g6+ ♔xh7 39 ♘xf8+ is a strong threat. 37 ♕b6?! is the next-best move, but after 37...c3 38 ♕b7! ♘d3, White has nothing decisive.

37...fxe5

37...♔xh7 38 ♕b6! (threatening 39 ♕b7, cutting through to g7) 38...♖a2 39 ♕e6! (threats include ♘d7; 39 ♕b7?? fails to 39...♖xb2+! 40 ♔c1 ♘a2+ 41 ♔xb2 ♕xe5+ 42 ♔xa2 ♖c7) 39...♖a6 40 ♕d7 ♕xd7 41 ♘xd7 ♖a7 (otherwise g7 falls without a fight) 42 ♘xf6+! with a mating attack after 42...gxf6 43 ♗xf6 or 42...♔h8 43 ♖g6 threatening 44 ♖xh6+ gxh6 45 ♖g8#.

38 f6 g5 39 ♖xg5!? 1-0

Mate is forced: after 39...hxg5 40 ♕xg5 Black can't defend both g7 and g8.

249) The 'hand reaches' to put the rook on c1, but in fact the knight needs this square in a critical line. The winning line is 29...♘d3! 30 ♗a1 (30 ♗d4 ♘c1! and ...♘e2+ wins a piece) 30...♖c1 31 ♗d4 (31 ♔f1 fails due to 31...♘c5, hitting the bishop that protects the d1-rook) 31...e5, overloading the bishop – it cannot cover both b2 and c5: 32 ♗e3 (32 ♗a1 ♘c5) 32...♖xd1+ 33 ♗xd1 ♘b2 and Black gets a won endgame, two pawns up.

The game showed why the most natural move fails: **29...♖c1? 30 ♔f1 ♘d3 31 ♗d4** (with the moves 29...♖c1? 30 ♔f1 inserted, the bishop is safe on this square, where it prevents ...♘c5) **31...a5** (after 31...e5 32 ♗e3 ♖xd1+ 33 ♗xd1 ♘b2 34 ♔e2 the white king arrives in time to cover the bishop) **32 ♔e2 ♘c5 33 ♗d5 e6 34 ♔xd2** and White was out of danger (at least).

250) The brilliant quiet continuation 30...♕e3!!, threatening 31...♕g1+ 32 ♖xg1 ♘f2#, turns out to win after some rather difficult sequences:

a) 31 ♘xe8+ ♖xe8 32 gxh3 ♗d3!.

b) 31 ♖f3 ♕e1+ 32 ♖f1 ♗xf1 33 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 34 ♘xe8+ ♔f8 35 b5 (35 g3 ♘f4) 35...♖d1! 36 ♕a4 ♗xb5+ 37 ♕xd1 ♘f2+ 38 ♔g1 ♘xd1 and Black wins a piece.

c) 31 gxh3 ♗xf1 32 ♘xe8+ (32 ♖xf1 ♖c8!) 32...♔h6!! (this move leads to a beautiful forced win; the simpler 32...♖xe8?! 33 ♖xf1 ♕e4+ is quite good for Black, and therefore enough to conclude that 30...♕e3 is the best try, as long as you assessed the other two options correctly) 33 ♖xf1 ♕d3! 34 ♔g1 ♕xh3! 35 ♘f6 ♖e2 36 ♘g8+ ♔g7 37 ♖xf7+ ♔h8!? 38 ♖h7+ ♔xh7 39 ♘f6+ ♔h6!? 40 ♘g8+ ♔g7 41 ♕a7+ ♔xg8 42 ♘e7+ ♔f7 (not 42...♔h7?? 43 ♘f5+ and Black is mated!) 43 ♘f5+ ♔f6!. I doubt anyone could see all of that, but very well done if you felt that 30...♕e3 was the best move.

The next best option, 30...♕xg2+? 31 ♔xg2 ♗xf1+, only draws: 32 ♖xf1 (not 32 ♔xf1?? ♖f4+ 33 ♔g2 ♖f2+ 34 ♔h1 {34 ♔xh3 ♖e3+ 35 ♔h4 ♖f4+ 36 ♔g5 ♖g4#} 34...♖ee2 and Black wins) 32...♖g4+ 33 ♔f3 (33 ♔h1?? ♘f2+; 33 ♔xh3?? ♖e3+) 33...♖f4+ 34 ♔g2 (34 ♔g3?? ♖e3+) 34...♖g4+ 35 ♔f3 ♖f4+ 36 ♔g2, repeating.

The move Black played in the game, **30...♘f2+??**, even loses: **31 ♖xf2 ♖e1+ 32 ♖f1!** (this must have come as a most unpleasant surprise for Black) **32...♗xf1 33 ♘xe8+ ♔h7 34 ♕xg5 1-0**.

251) 24...♖xb2!

Black falls in with White's intentions, having seen a fatal flaw. In fact, Black has little real choice, as 24...e4? 25 ♘gxe4 ♖xb2 26 ♘xf6 ♕d8 27 ♕c1 ♖xf2 28 ♘ce4 ♖bb2 29 ♘h5+ gxh5 30 ♘xf2 is awful for Black, and otherwise fxe5 follows, with a large advantage for White.

25 ♕xb2

Seeing the problem, White gives up his queen, but his chances are poor in

the resulting position. 25 fxe5? loses, but not to 25...♖xd2?? 26 exf6+, which gives White an extra piece. 25...♘g4? is almost the right idea, but 26 ♘h5+! keeps White very much in the fight. 25...♘e4!! is the star move. Putting itself *en prise* to three white pieces, the knight avoids exf6+ and leaves White searching in vain for a way to rescue his many attacked pieces. 26 ♘h5+ gxh5 achieves nothing now that g5 is protected, while 26 ♘cxe4 ♖xd2 27 ♘f6 ♕e6 (27...♖xd6 is also safe) 28 ♖xd2 ♗xa4 doesn't give White enough for the queen, and 26 ♕f4 ♖xf2 27 ♕xe4 ♗c6 is hopeless for White.

White's prospects are also bleak after 25 ♕e3 exf4 26 ♕c1 fxg3 27 ♖xb2 ♕xe1+! 28 ♕xe1 ♖xb2 with ...♗c6 coming soon.

25...♖xb2 26 ♖xb2 e4 27 ♘f1 (27 ♖b7 e3) **27...♗xa4 28 g4 ♗c6 29 ♖b6 ♕c8** and Black won.

252) 24...♘e4! overloads the white pieces so the black queen and rook can hunt the enemy king to its death:

a) 25 ♖d7 ♕c4+ 26 ♔b1 ♕f1+ 27 ♔a2 (27 ♔c2 ♖c8+) 27...♘c3+! 28 bxc3 ♕c4+ 29 ♔a1 (otherwise ...♕b5+ picks up the rook) 29...♕xc3+ 30 ♔a2 ♕c2+ 31 ♔a1 ♕c1+ 32 ♔a2 ♖c8 and ...♖c2+ wins.

b) 25 ♘xe4 ♕a1+ 26 ♔c2 ♕d1+ 27 ♔c3 ♕d3+ 28 ♔b4 a5+ 29 ♔a4 (29 ♔xa5 ♕b3 and ...♖a8#) 29...♕xe4+ with a decisive king-hunt.

So, the iron was hot, but in the game, to mix a metaphor, Black fiddled: **24...h6? 25 ♕f3 b5 26 ♕f5 ♕a1+ 27 ♕b1** and White went on to salvage a draw.

253) 19 ♘d2! threatens 20 c4, which Black has no fully satisfactory way to parry:

a) 19...♗c2 20 c4 bxc4 (20...♗xb1 21 ♗xd5; 20...b4 21 ♕c1 ♗xb1 22 ♗xd5) 21 ♖c1 g5 (to give the bishop a square; 21...♗f5 22 e4; 21...♗d3 22 ♕xd3) 22 ♗xg5 ♗g6 23 ♗xe7 and White will be a pawn up with an excellent position.

b) 19...♕d7 20 c4 (20 ♘e4 is also good) 20...♘b6 21 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 22 cxb5 e5 23 ♘f3 (or 23 ♕d3!?) doesn't give Black enough for the exchange.

But doesn't the other knight retreat work just as well? As Avrukh discovered to his cost, this is not so. After **19 ♘b2? ♗c2 20 c4 b4**, the knight's presence on b2 means that White has no good square for his queen. Black wins material in the case of 21 cxd5? bxa3 22 dxc6 ♗xb1, while **21 ♕a2 ♘c3 22 ♗xc6 ♘xa2 23 ♖e1 b3 24 ♗xe7 ♖fe8 25 ♗a3 a4 26 ♔f1 ♖eb8 27 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 28 ♔e2 c5 29 ♔d2?** (29 ♗xc5 a3 30 ♗xa3 ♖xa3 gives White much better chances of hanging on) **29...cxd4 30 exd4 ♗xd4 31 ♖e7 ♗c3+ 32 ♔e3 ♗f6 33 ♖d7 ♖e8+** led to victory for Black in the game. A most surprising turn of events!

254) 34...♖d5! is essentially a consolidating move, cutting out any ideas of ♕xe6 which, while not a threat, comes into play in many variations otherwise. Black intends ...♖f8 and has also freed his queen for moves like ...♕h4. There is no good way for White to use the free move he has been given:

a) 35 ♗xg6 ♕h4 (35...♖f8 is also good) 36 ♖c8+ (36 ♘h6+ ♕xh6; 36 ♔xg2 ♕g4+ and ...♕xg6) 36...♖xc8 37 ♕xc8+ ♔g7 and White is busted.

b) 35 ♔xg2 ♖f8 36 ♕d3 (what else?) 36...♕g4+ with ...♖xf7 to follow.

c) 35 ♕c1 obviously makes no sense while Black's queen is still on f4.

d) 35 ♕d3 (35 ♕e2 is met in the same way) 35...♕f1+ 36 ♕xf1 gxf1♕+ 37 ♔xf1 ♖f8 38 ♗xg6 ♔g7 39 ♗h5 ♖xe5 and Black wins, the rook's usefulness on d5 becoming very clear.

Let's see why other moves are less good. 34...♕f1+?! is the second-best continuation. After 35 ♕xf1 gxf1♕+ 36 ♔xf1 ♖dc8 (36...♖f8?! 37 ♗xg6 ♔g7 38 ♗h5) 37 ♘h6+ ♔h8 (37...♔f8? 38 ♖f7+) 38 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 39 ♔e2 Black is better, but this ending is a far cry from the clear win that he could have had. 34...♕h4? yields no more than a draw: 35 ♔xg2 (35 ♘h6+ ♕xh6 36 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 37 ♕f6+ ♔g8 is another path to a draw) 35...♖d5 (35...♖f8? loses to 36 ♕xe6) 36 ♕c1 d3 37 ♘h6+, etc. Black chose the natural **34...♖f8?**, but **35 ♗xg6!** brought White fully into the game. After **35...♕e3+** (35...♔g7? 36 ♘h8+! is even favourable for White, while after 35...♕f1+ 36 ♕xf1 gxf1♕+ 37 ♔xf1 ♔g7 38 ♗h5 a draw is likely) **36 ♔xg2**, Black could have kept the game level by 36...♔g7 37 ♕c2 ♖fc8 38 ♘d8+ ♖xc7, when 39 ♘xe6+ ♔h6 40 ♕xc7 will lead to perpetual check by one side or the other.

255) No. Black should prefer something like 20...♘d5, staying well on top. **20...♗xd2? 21 ♗xd2 ♘c4** frittered away Black's advantage. After **22 exf6!** (not 22 ♕g5?? ♘xd2 23 exf6 ♘xf3+) Black must play **22...♕f8** (not 22...♕xf6? 23 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8 24 ♖xe8#, while 22...♕xe3? 23 ♗xe3 leaves White a piece up, as does 22...♘xe3? 23 fxe7 ♖xd2 24 ♗a4 ♖xe7 25 ♖xb7 followed by ♖xe3). White could then have secured a roughly level ending by means of the forcing sequence 23 ♕g5! ♘xd2 (23...♖xe1+? 24 ♗xe1; 23...♖xd2? 24 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 25 ♕xg7#) 24 ♖xe8 ♘xf3+ (24...♖xe8? 25 ♕xd2) 25 ♔g2 ♘xg5 26 ♖xf8+. After 26...♔xf8 27 fxg7+ ♔xg7 28 ♖xb7 ♖d2 29 ♖xc7 (29 ♗b3 ♘e4 30 ♔f3 ♘c5) 29...♘e6 30 ♖c4 a draw is likely.

256) 15...0-0!

At a glance it seems that Black is just accepting that he will stay a pawn down. Then we spot that the e5-knight is in trouble due to the attack on d4. Next the full truth dawns: the white king is fatally exposed as the b-file and long diagonal converge on b2 – Black is close to winning! Other moves yield less: 15...cxd4?! 16 ♘c7+ ♔d8 17 ♘xf7+ ♔xc7 18 ♕g3+ and 15...♖c8?! 16 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 may favour Black, but are far less clear (in the latter case because the rook is less effectively placed on c8 than it is on b8 in the game continuation). 15...axb5? 16 ♗xb5 leaves the game highly unclear; e.g., 16...♗xe5 17 dxe5 ♗c8 or 16...0-0 17 ♘xd7 cxd4 18 ♖xd4 ♖fd8 19 a4.

16 ♘xd7 (not 16 ♘c3? cxd4 costing White a piece) **16...♕xd7 17 ♘a3** (even worse is 17 ♘c3? cxd4 18 ♗f1 ♖ab8) **17...♖ab8! 18 ♕g3?** (18 ♘c4 cxd4 19 ♕g3 ♗d5 20 b3 a5 and 18 b3 cxd4 19 ♕g3 ♗d5 both give Black a beautiful position and an automatic attack) **18...♕xd4** (18...♗xg2! 19 ♕xg2 ♕xd4 is even stronger) **19 c3 ♕a4 20 ♗c4? ♗xg2 0-1**

257) 18...♗a6! 19 ♕b3

The main point is that 19 ♗xa6 is met by 19...♖xf3!, when the white king is in grave danger; e.g., 20 gxf3?! ♘xf3+ 21 ♔f1 ♖f8. With the a6-bishop therefore untouchable, White is left with only bad options, with his light squares becoming very weak. 19 ♘xe5 ♗xe2 20 ♕c3 (20 ♗c3 ♗a6 21 ♘xg4 ♕f4) 20...♖ad8! 21 ♗g5 ♘xe5 22 ♗xd8 ♕f7 gives Black a strong attack.

19...♗xe2 20 ♔xe2 ♕c8! (intending ...♕a6+) **21 ♖c3 ♖b8 22 ♕a4?** (now Black's attack becomes decisive; 22 ♕c2 is more resilient, but after, say, 22...♕c7 White has an unpleasant defence ahead of him) **22...♖b2 23 ♕xa7 ♖f7 24 ♕a4 ♕b8 25 h3 ♖a7 26 ♕d1 ♘f6 27 ♖c2 ♕b5+ 28 ♔f2 ♘xe4+ 29 ♔g1 ♘xf3+ 0-1**

258) 44...♘xd4! is a nice combination that exploits the exposure of White's king and the loose knight on c7. It is a happy coincidence that the knight's fleeting appearance on d4 prevents ♘b5+. After 45 ♗xd4 (not 45 ♘xd5?? ♕g3+ 46 ♔d2 ♕g2+ and ...♕xd5) 45...♗h4+ 46 ♗f2 (46 ♔f1 ♕xf4+ and 46 ♔d2 ♕xf4+ are both followed by ...♕xc7) 46...♕g1+ 47 ♔d2 ♕xf2+ 48 ♔d1 ♕g1+ 49 ♔c2 ♕c5+ 50 ♕c3 ♕f2+ 51 ♔b3 ♕xf4 there is no longer any danger for Black.

44...♕g3+? 45 ♔d2 leaves a tough defence ahead of Black, while in the game, White won the endgame after **44...♘d6? 45 ♘b5+ ♘xb5 46 ♕xb5 ♕g3+ 47 ♔d2 ♕g2+ 48 ♕e2.**

259) The calm 31 f4! is best. Securing the e5-pawn and controlling g5 turn out to matter more than anything else – and one free move isn't enough for Black to solve his problems on the a2-g8 diagonal. 31...exf5 (otherwise fxe6 will slice Black apart; for example, 31...♘d8 32 fxe6 ♕e7 33 ♖d1) 32 ♕xf5 ♔h8 (Black must simply surrender the knight, as 32...♖f8? 33 e6 is a wipe-out) 33 ♗xf7 ♘xb4 34 ♘e4 gives White an overwhelming game with his connected passed pawns, dominant knight and threats to the black king: 34...♘d5 (34...♖a3 35 ♘f6; 34...♕c8 35 ♕g6! ♕xh3 36 ♗e6 and ♗f5) 35 ♔h1 ♖f8 36 ♘d6 ♕e7 37 ♖g1, etc.

Other moves achieve far less. 31 fxe6?! ♘g5 32 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 33 e7+ ♔h8 34 ♘xc7 ♘xc7 35 ♖xe4 ♖e8 is an unbalanced ending that Black should hold with a little care, while after 31 f6?! ♕xe5 32 ♕xe5 ♘xe5 33 ♖xe5 ♗xf6 34 ♖xe6 ♔g7 the weakness of the b4-pawn and the prospect of opposite bishops should also enable him to draw. 31 ♘xb5? ♕xe5 32 ♕b1 ♕xf5 33 ♕xf5 exf5 34 ♘d6 ♔f8 followed by ...♘xb4 leaves Black with little to fear. After **31 ♗xe6? ♕xe5** the loose pieces on e1 and c3 limit White's choice: he is forced to exchange off into an ending where his queenside pawns drop, and must be careful not to end up worse. **32 ♕xe5 ♗xe5 33 ♖xe5 ♘xb4 34 ♖e4 ♘d3 35 ♖xh4 ♘xc5 36 ♖xh6 ♘xe6 37 ♖g6+ ♔h7 38 ♖xe6 b4 39 ♘e4** led eventually to a draw.

260) White has several ways to try to win material based on playing his bishop to e6 or a6 and taking on e4 or d4. However, only one sequence succeeds. 30 ♗a6! forces decisive material gains in all lines: 30...♖f8 (30...♖e8 31 ♘xe4 and ♕xc6; 30...♕xc3 31 ♖xc3 ♖c7 32 ♘xe4 fxe4 33 ♗b5 and the c-file pin decides; 30...♖c7? 31 ♕xd4) 31 ♘xe4 (31 ♗b7 ♕xc3 32 ♖xc3 ♘d4 33 ♗xa8 is also good) 31...fxe4 32 ♕xc6 ♕xf2+ 33 ♔h1 and White should win with a little care.

Here's why other moves fail to win: 30 ♗e6? ♖e8 31 ♗xf5+ (31 ♘xe4? ♖xe6 is the vital defence in this line) 31...♗xf5 32 ♘xf5 ♕xc3 33 ♖xc3 leaves White only a little better. The move chosen in the game, **30 ♘xe4?**, is also poor. Although **30...fxe4? 31 ♗e6 ♖f8 32 ♕xc6 ♕xf2+ 33 ♔h1 e3 34 ♗c4** left White a piece up for very little, 30...♕xe4! 31 ♖e1 (31 ♗a6? ♘d4! is a key tactical point, and presumably

what both players missed) 31...♕d4 would have restricted White to no more than an edge.

261) 88 f6!

White threatens 89 e7+, and prepares a tactical defence against ...♕xd2. Other moves fail as follows: 88 ♕b7?? ♘xa3+; 88 ♔xb2?? ♕xd2. 88 ♖xc2?? loses to 88...♕c1+! 89 ♖xc1 bxc1♕+ 90 ♔a2 ♖c2+, and 88 ♖d1?? fails to the same queen sacrifice, now crowned by a nice knight move into the corner: 88...♕c1+! 89 ♖xc1 bxc1♕+ 90 ♔xc1 ♘a1+.

88 g5? ♕xg5 leaves White struggling: 89 ♔xb2 (or 89 e7+ ♔g7!) 89...♘e3!, and after 88 e7+? ♔xe7! (88...♔g7? 89 f6+!) 89 f6+ ♔f8! White must find 90 ♕g3! just to maintain the balance; e.g., 90...♔g8 91 g5 ♘xa3+ 92 ♕xa3 ♕xg5 93 f7+ ♔g7 94 ♖d1.

88...♕xd2

88...♔g8 loses to 89 e7+ ♔h8 90 ♕xc2!, while 88...♕xf6 allows 89 ♖xc2, after which Black can't avoid a lost major-piece ending of some sort. After 88...♔e8 89 ♕b5+ ♔f8 90 e7+ ♔f7 91 ♕d5+ ♔xf6 92 ♖f2+ Black is mated. In the case of 88...♘xa3+ 89 ♕xa3+ ♔g8 90 ♖c2! (90 ♕xb2?? ♕h7+ 91 ♖c2 ♕d3! gives Black a draw by perpetual check) 90...♕g6 (90...♕c1+ is now no good because the white queen covers c1) 91 ♕b3, Black runs out of ideas.

89 e7+ ♔e8 90 ♕g8+ ♔d7 91 ♕xc8+ ♔xc8 92 e8♕+ ♔c7 (after 92...♔b7 93 ♕e4+ White picks up the knight in even more favourable circumstances) **93 ♕e5+ ♔c6 94 ♕e4+ ♔d6 95 ♕xc2**. White has liquidated to a won queen ending.

262) White wins as long as he sacrifices the correct piece on g6. 31 ♘xg6? fxg6 32 ♗xg6 ♔f6 is unconvincing, but 31 ♗xg6! wins. 31...fxg6 (31...♘xg6 32 ♘xg6 ♖xg6 33 ♖xg6+ fxg6 34 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 35 ♕g8+ ♔e7 36 ♖g7+ and mate follows) 32 ♘xg6 and now:

a) 32...♔f6 is no good here since the f8-knight is *en prise*, for one thing.

b) 32...♔f7 33 ♘e5+ ♔e6 34 ♖g7 and the black king is ensnared; e.g., 34...♘e4 35 ♘d3 ♕a5 (35...♕d6 36 ♘f4+ ♔f6 37 f3) 36 f3 ♘c3+ 37 ♔a1 ♖a7 38 ♘c5+ ♔f6 39 ♕g2, forcing mate.

c) 32...♖xg6 33 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 34 ♖g7+ ♔e8 35 f3! prevents ...♘e4 and prepares to bring the white queen into the attack; Black has no good defence.

In the game, **31 ♔c1?** not only missed the chance, but even lessened the threat of a sacrifice on g6 by inviting ...♕c3+ later on. By 31...♘e8, Black could have defended with moves like ...♕d6 and prepared counterplay with ...c5. After 32 ♘xg6 (32 ♗xg6 fxg6 33 ♘xg6 comes to the same thing here) 32...fxg6 33 ♗xg6 ♘xg6 34 ♖xg6+ ♖xg6 35 ♕xg6+ (35 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 36 ♕f5+ ♔e7 37 ♖e6+ ♔d8 is a similar story) 35...♔f8 White's attack is worth no more than a draw because of his exposed king.

263) Black must seize the chance to use the pressure on the long diagonal to rip the defences from the white king. 24...cxd4! 25 exf5 (25 cxd4? loses to 25...♘xd4+ or 25...♗xd4! 26 ♘xd4 ♕xe4+ 27 ♔d2 ♘xd4) 25...d3+ 26 ♔e3 ♗h6+ 27 ♗f4 ♗xf4+ 28 ♔xf4 e5+ gives Black a massive attack: 29 ♔e3 (29 ♘xe5 ♖fe8! and now 30 ♘f3 ♖e2 or 30 c4 f6!) 29...♕h3 30 ♖cg1 ♖ae8 (threatening ...e4) 31 ♖g3 (31 fxg6 fxg6 32 ♖g3 ♕f5) 31...♕h6+ 32 ♘g5 (32 ♔xd3 e4+) 32...f6 33 fxg6 fxg5 and White suffers heavy losses.

Black instead played the lazy move **24...♘d6?**, missing the rather major point that his queen is in danger: **25 h3 ♘xe4 26 ♗h4** (trapping the queen) **26...cxd4 27 cxd4 e5 28 ♖cg1 ♕xh1?!** (28...exd4 29 ♖xg2 d3+ 30 ♔xd3 ♗xb2 31 ♔xe4 is unclear) **29 ♖xh1 exd4** and Black somehow managed to survive this position.

264) 20...♕b7! is very strong. Together with ideas featuring pin and overload, Black can create a mate threat against g2, and this is too much for White's position to bear. 21 ♖xc3?! ♘xc3 22 ♖c1 ♘e2+ 23 ♗xe2 ♕xb2 24 ♖xc8+ ♗f8 favours Black, while 21 ♕b1? loses to 21...♖xc1 22 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 23 ♕xc1 ♕xb5. The game went **21 ♖b1?! ♘xe3! 22 fxe3 ♖c2** (this is the main point) **23 ♗c6 ♕xc6 24 ♕b7 ♖xg2+ 25 ♔h1 ♖xa2+ 26 ♕xc6 ♖xc6** and, with two extra pawns, Black went on to win.

The best reply, 21 e4!? will leave White a pawn down after 21...♗xd4 22 ♖b1 ♘f6 (22...♘c7 23 ♕xc3 ♗xc3 24 ♗d7 is less clear) 23 ♕d2 ♖d8 24 ♗a4 (24 ♗d3 ♕c6) 24...♕e4 or 21...♖xc1 22 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 23 ♕xc1 ♕xb5 24 exd5 ♕xd5.

265) White can pick off the d5-pawn for free with a neat and thematic combination, backed up by mating ideas: 16 ♘xd5! ♗xd5 17 ♖cd1! (17 ♖fd1? fails as 17...♕b7 18 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 19 ♗e4 ♖d1+! is check) 17...♕e6 (17...♕b7 18 ♖xd5 is similar) 18 ♖xd5! (not 18 ♗h3? ♗f3!) 18...♖xd5?! (but otherwise Black is a pawn down with a bad position) 19 ♗e4! (now 19 ♗h3? fails because of 19...e4!) 19...f5 20 ♗xf5 and Black must give up his queen to avoid mate. This deadly bishop manoeuvre succeeds because White's sacrifices have given him a firm grip on the key light squares.

White missed his chance by choosing **16 e4?**, when he had no more than an edge.

266) 31 ♖c8! ♔e8 (31...♖a8 32 d7 ♔e7 33 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 34 ♖c8) 32 ♖3c7! (threatening ♖e7+) 32...♖xc8 (32...♖a8 33 d7+ ♔e7 34 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 35 ♖c8) 33 d7+! (the key idea) and dxc8♕+. This theme occurred in the game Langeweg-Wade, England-Holland match, London 1971, which you can find in some older puzzle books (e.g., *It's Your Move* by Teschner and Miles).

Play instead concluded **31 ♖d7? ♔e8 32 ♖e7+ ♔f8 33 ♖b7** (33 ♖cc7 ♖f5) **33...g6 34 ♖c6 ½-½**.

Chapter 8

267) 11...e5! blasts open lines to exploit White's internal weaknesses (to use John Watson's term). Now White will have no time to force back Black's minor pieces. General principles that might have led you to this idea:

1) If you have made concessions to gain the initiative (here oddly placed pieces), you should consider all means to keep the initiative, including material sacrifices;

2) A successful pawn-break on an apparently very well guarded square is often devastating. That's because the enemy pieces covering the square are shown to be impotent (and neglecting squares where they could have meaningful influence) while your own pieces have 'supported' the break while keeping their control of other squares.

White has no fully satisfactory answer. 12 dxe5?? ♘d3+, 12 d5? ♗f5 and 12 ♗xe5?! ♗f5 all allow Black's main ideas, which leaves three moves to consider:

a) 12 ♘f3 exd4 13 ♕xd4 (13 ♘xd4? ♘8c6!) 13...♘d3+ 14 ♔d1 ♗f5 with an easy advantage for Black.

b) 12 ♖xe5 ♘8c6 forces White to give up an exchange; e.g., 13 ♖xg5 ♕xg5 14 ♘f3 ♕g6 15 d5 ♗e6!.

c) 12 a3 exd4 13 axb4 dxc3 leads to a miserable ending for White, as his pieces come into play too slowly to counter Black's queenside and central dominance. 14 ♕xd8 (14 bxc3 a5 15 b5 ♗f6 16 ♖e3 ♗e6 and the advance of the a-pawn will cause major problems for White) 14...♗xd8 15 bxc3 a5 16 ♖a2 (16 ♗d6 axb4! 17 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 leaves White in a mess in view of 18 cxb4?! ♖a1+ 19 ♔d2 ♖xf1; 16 b5 ♗f6 17 ♗e5 ♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♘d7 followed by advancing the a-pawn) 16...♗f6 17 ♖a3 (17 ♘e2 ♘c6 18 b5 ♘e7) 17...♖e8+ 18 ♘e2 ♗f5 leaves White in trouble.

268) 30...♗d4! is a good move that is hard to see as it puts the bishop *en prise*. But targeting the white king makes a lot of sense, and an exchange of bishops would bring the black rook into play too. So I hope you at least toyed with this idea. Some variations:

a) 31 g3?? h3 leaves White in grave danger of being mated.

b) 31 h3 ♘g3+ 32 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 33 ♔h1 ♘g3+ is an immediate draw.

c) 31 ♕b7 ♖e8 is clearly a drastic improvement over the game continuation (see below) from Black's viewpoint. 32 ♗a5 (White must cover e1) 32...♘f2+ 33 ♔g1 ♘g4+ 34 ♔h1 (34 ♔f1?? ♘xh2#) 34...♘f2+ (34...♖e2? is no good in view of 35 h3) with perpetual check.

d) 31 ♕xd4 ♖xc7 is the critical line:

d1) 32 ♕e3 ♖c2 should be safe for Black, as he removes White's b-pawn and retains threats that prevent White from activating his queen any time soon; meanwhile, Black's pieces are well-coordinated. Note that 33 b3?? loses to 33...♖d2! 34 h3 (34 ♕f3 ♖d1+) 34...♘g3+! 35 ♔g1 (35 ♔h2 ♘f1+) 35...♖d1+ 36 ♔f2 ♖f1#.

d2) 32 ♕g1 ♘f2+! (an odd variant on the smothered mate idea, and better than 32...♖c2?! 33 ♕b1) 33 ♕xf2 ♖c1+ 34 ♕g1 ♖xg1+ 35 ♔xg1 is a pawn ending upon which the assessment of the position hinges. If you saw this far when analysing 30...♗d4 and felt that it was worth trying, then consider the exercise fully solved. Black can indeed hold the draw: 35...♔f7 36 ♔f2 ♔e7 37 g3 ♔d7! 38 gxh4 (38 ♔g2 ♔c7! 39 ♔h3 hxg3 40 ♔xg3 ♔b6 41 ♔h4 ♔c5 42 ♔g5 ♔xd5 43 ♔xg6 ♔e4 leads to a draw) 38...♔e7! and the black king can defend on whichever side of the board the white king tries to penetrate.

In the game, **30...♖e8?** allowed the white king time to escape from his prison. After **31 ♔g1 ♔h7 32 ♔f1 ♖c8 33 ♕b7 ♖e8 34 ♗a5 ♔h6 35 ♗e1** White won shortly.

269) 24 ♗h6! is a beautiful tactical blow, based on the undefended position of the black queen, amongst other things.

24...gxh6

24...♘c3!? 25 ♕h3! gxh6 26 ♘f6+ is the same basic idea as in the game continuation, though with a rather different outcome: 26...♖xf6 27 ♕g4+ ♖g6 28 ♘xh6+ ♔h8! 29 ♕xd7 ♗c6! 30 ♕h3 ♖xg2+ 31 ♕xg2 ♗xg2 32 ♔xg2 ♘xb1 33 ♖xb1 gives White winning chances in the ending.

Other moves are clearly worse. After 24...g6? 25 ♘g7 there is no good answer to ♗xe4 and ♘f6+ ideas. 24...♖xh6?! is met by 25 ♘fxh6+ gxh6 26 ♗xe4 and ♘f6+, while 24...♖g6?! 25 ♗xg7 h5 (25...♘d6 26 ♕h3) 26 ♘gh6+ ♔h7

27 ♕h3! ♖xg7 28 f3! gives Black problems.

25 ♘f6+ ♖xf6 26 ♕g4+ ♘g5 27 ♘xh6+ ♖xh6 28 ♕xd7 ♗c6 29 ♕g4 ♔h8 30 ♖xb4?!

This turns out to let Black off the hook, though the reasons for this are hard to foresee. 30 ♕f5 ♗d2 (30...♖g8 31 f3) 31 ♖fd1 leaves Black in greater difficulties.

30...♖g8! 31 ♖bb1 ♘e6 32 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 33 ♗xb5 ♘f4! 34 ♖fe1 ♗xb5 35 ♖xb5 c4 36 g3 d3 37 gxf4 c3 38 ♖c5 c2 39 ♖e8+ ♔g7 40 ♖d8 ♖b6 41 ♖xd3 ♖b1+ 42 ♔g2 c1♕ ½-½

270) 43...♗d4! is one of those unlikely-looking moves that just happen to work. The general logic is that White's knights are the one solid part of his defences, and their power is now broken. More concretely, it enables Black to keep making threats with every move. After 44 ♘xd4 ♕xd2 all the white pieces are vulnerable:

a) 45 ♕b8+ ♔g7 46 ♕xd6 (46 ♕b7 cxd4 47 a6 ♘h1!? 48 ♔xh1 ♕xf2 49 a7 f3 and White is mated) 46...♕xf2+ 47 ♔xf2 ♘e4+ and Black has an extra piece.

b) 45 a6 ♕d1! attacks the white king around the back:

b1) 46 ♗xg3 ♕xd4 (threatening to play ...♗d5+) 47 ♕b8+ ♔g7 48 ♕b7 fxg3 49 ♔xg3 c4 50 h4 (50 a7 ♕g1+! 51 ♔f4 ♕f2+) 50...c3 51 a7 c2 52 a8♕ c1♕ is a lost 'four queens' position for White.

b2) 46 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 47 ♔g2 ♘d2 48 ♔h2 (48 ♕a8+ ♔g7 49 ♘f5+ ♔h7 and Black's attack takes over) 48...♕f1! 49 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 50 ♔xg2 ♗d5+ with a trivially won ending for Black.

c) 45 ♘f3 ♕e2 46 ♕b1 ♘e4 47 ♕f1 ♕c2 intends ...♗c4, stopping White's a-pawn while pushing White's pieces around. Black's three healthy passed pawns will carry the day.

In the game, **43...♗c4?** covered a6 but lost the initiative. After **44 g5 hxg5 45 a6!** (the a-pawn proves more valuable as a distraction than as a promotion candidate) **45...♗xa6 46 ♕d5+ ♔h7 47 ♘xg5+ ♔g6 48 ♕f7+ ♔h6 49 ♕xf4** White had enough counterplay and the game was later drawn.

271) 9 b4! grabs a serious initiative, and is based on some striking tactical ideas.

a) The meek 9...♗c7 allows White a very pleasant game after 10 d3 ♘e5 11 bxc5, with rapid development and a strong central presence.

b) 9...♗b6 10 bxc5 ♗xc5 11 ♘a4 leaves Black resorting to tactical tricks to save his piece, but after 11...♕c7 12 d3 ♘xa3 13 ♗xa3 ♗xf2+ 14 ♔d1 the extra piece and White's development advantage greatly outweigh the three pawns.

c) 9...♘xa3 10 ♖xa3 cxb4 11 ♘b5 and again White has a good piece for three pawns, since 11...bxa3? 12 ♗xa3 is suicide for Black.

d) 9...cxb4 10 axb4 ♗b6 (10...♗xb4? 11 ♘a2) 11 d3 ♘d6 12 e4 gives White fantastic compensation for the pawn, as Black's pieces lack secure squares. Note 12...♘g4 13 h3! ♘xf2 14 ♖f1, trapping the knight.

The game continued **9 ♘a4?! d5 10 ♘xc5 0-0**, following the path taken by Hraček-Karpov, Cap d'Agde (rapid) 1996. Black has a solid position, and the computer game, like the human one, ended in a draw.

272) I'm sure you considered playing 38 ♖xg5+! hxg5, but maybe couldn't see how to divert the king from the defence of its queen. The pawn and

bishop do some of the work, and the rest is achieved by mating threats: 39 h6+ ♔g6 40 ♗d3+ ♘f5 41 ♗xf5+! ♔xf5 (41...♕xf5 is the only way to save queen and king, but 42 ♕g7+ ♔h5 43 ♕xf8 is hopeless for Black, two pawns down and with White's d- and h-pawns both monsters) 42 ♕d3+! (42 ♕f3+ ♔g6 43 ♖c6 is a 'safety-net' which White could have used to simplify his calculation – if there turned out to be nothing better, then White could have gone into this line quite safely) 42...♔g4 (42...♔e5 43 ♖e1+ ♔d6 44 ♕c4! gives White decisive threats) 43 ♔g2! (not 43 ♕e4+? ♔h5 44 ♔g2 g4, muddying the water) and Black can only delay mate at an enormous cost in material.

In the game, White chose **38 ♗d3?**, which rather broadcasts the threat of ♖xg5+. Black sidestepped this idea by **38...♔g8**, and went on to draw the game many moves later after a very stubborn defence.

273) 83...♕c6! threatens 84...♕e8+, but the main point is to tie down the white pieces. 84 f7 ♕g6+ 85 ♔h4 ♕g4# and 84 ♖f2 ♕h1+ are both simple. After 84 ♔h6 the winning move is 84...♕a8! (84...♕e8? 85 ♖c3+ ♔d6 86 ♖d3+ is a draw since the king cannot move to e6) since the checks run out after 85 ♖c3+ ♔d6 86 ♖d3+ ♔e6. Accurate queen moves also feature in the line 84 ♗h3 ♕e8+ 85 ♔h4 ♕g8! 86 ♖c3+ (86 f7 ♕d8+ 87 ♖f6 ♕h8+) 86...♔b6 87 ♖h5 ♕g6! 88 ♖b3+ ♔c7 89 ♗f5 (89 ♖c3+ ♔d6) 89...♕xf6+ 90 ♔h3 ♖h1+. The game concluded **84 ♔h4 ♕e4+! 85 ♔h3** (85 ♖3f4 ♕e1+ 86 ♔h5 {86 ♖f2 ♖xf1} 86...♕g3 and White will be mated) **85...♖h1+!** (not 85...♕g4+?? 86 ♔h2, when it is White who wins!) **86 ♔g2 ♕h4! 87 ♖c3+ ♔d6 0-1**. White can only delay mate at a catastrophic material cost.

The most striking feature of this puzzle is the number of unique squares the black queen needed to use in a variety of lines to force victory.

274) 26...♖e6!! is the right move, simply abandoning the bishop and bringing reinforcements into the attack before White is able to challenge the f4-knight. 27 ♕f2 (27 ♖xb7 ♖g6! leaves White defenceless; e.g., 28 ♖d1 ♘xg2 29 ♕xg2 ♕xh3!) 27...♘xh3+ (the simple 27...♕e7 is also strong) 28 gxh3 ♖g6+ 29 ♔f1 ♕xh3+ 30 ♔e2 ♖g2 31 ♖xb7 ♖xf2+ 32 ♔xf2 ♕h2+ 33 ♔f1 h5 and the advance of the h-pawn causes White acute problems.

26...♖c6?! is less effective, since it blocks the bishop and leaves the rook exposed to attack in lines like 27 e5 ♘xh3+ 28 ♔f1 ♕g3 29 ♖xb7 ♕h2 30 ♗e4. Black's actual choice, **26...♗a6?**, looks like a good idea: it increases the pressure on the white position, and the fact that 27 ♗xa6? is impossible (due to 27...♖c2 28 ♕xc2 ♕xe1+ and ...♕xb4) might be mistaken for a sign that Black is on the right track. However, **27 ♖d1!** got White largely out of danger, since 27...♗xd3 28 ♘xd3 removes Black's knight and with it his attacking chances, while 27...♘xh3+ 28 gxh3 ♖c6 29 ♗f1 ♗xf1 30 ♔xf1 is survivable too. White managed to draw the ending after **27...♖c6 28 ♗xa6 ♘xh3+ 29 ♔f1 ♘f4 30 ♕f2 ♕h1+ 31 ♕g1 ♕xg1+ 32 ♔xg1 ♖xa6 33 ♘d3 ♘e6 34 f4** followed by f5.

275) 15 e6! fits the bill nicely. White avoids giving Black any natural way to complete his development, and finds some neat tactical ideas to maintain threats against the black king stuck in

the centre. Then 15...fxe6?? 16 ♕xe6, 15...♘d8? 16 exf7+ ♘xf7 17 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 18 ♖d6! and 15...♘f6? 16 exf7+ ♔f8 17 ♕e6, with ♘e5 coming next, are clearly no good for Black. That leaves the two moves by the f-pawn:

a) 15...f5 doesn't prevent 16 ♘h4! ♘f6 (16...♗xh4 17 ♕h5+ g6 18 ♕xh4 h6 19 ♖ac1 with strong pressure; 16...g6 17 ♘xf5 ♘f6 transposes) 17 ♘xf5 g6. White now has a pleasant choice, with 18 ♗g5 0-0 (18...gxf5 19 ♗xf6 0-0 20 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 21 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 22 ♖d7 ♖c7 23 ♖ad1 gives White more than enough for the piece) 19 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 20 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 21 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖d7 leaving him a pawn up, since 22...♖c7? loses to 23 ♕e5.

b) 15...f6 16 ♘h4 g6 17 ♘f5! gives Black major development problems and a tough defensive task; e.g.: 17...h5? fails to 18 ♕e4!, while after 17...♗c5?! 18 ♗e3!? ♗xe3 19 ♘d6+ ♔f8 20 ♕xe3 White regains the piece with a big advantage. 17...♘d8?! 18 ♗e3 ♕c7 19 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 20 ♖d7 ♕c6 21 ♖ad1 ♘xe6 22 ♖xe7+ ♘xe7 23 ♘d6+ ♔d7 24 ♘xc8+ ♔xc8 25 ♖c1 leads to a won ending for White. 17...♔f8 gives White nothing truly incisive, but plenty of ways to maintain strong pressure and prevent Black's pieces from deploying effectively. For example, 18 ♕f3 ♘e5 19 ♗xe5 ♗xd5 20 ♖xd5 gxf5 21 ♕xf5.

The more sophisticated 15 ♗e3?! ♕c7 16 ♖ac1 ♕b8 17 e6 f6 (17...♘d8 18 exf7+ ♘xf7 19 ♗c5 ♗xd5 20 ♖xd5 is not so clear either) gives White less, since 18 ♘h4?! g6 19 ♘f5 can be met by 19...♘e5.

276) 17 e5! has to be White's choice – otherwise Black's idea has succeeded. The forced sequence **17...♘xe5 18 axb4!** (18 ♘xe5? is no good in view of 18...♘xd5!) **18...♘xf3+ 19 ♘xf3 ♗xa1** leads to a position where White's pieces are beautifully placed for a Greek Gift sacrifice. If you got this far, you may have found it hard to decide if the sacrifice was strong, and needed to rely on intuition. In fact, it is more or less winning: **20 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7** (20...♔h8 is no saving clause, because after 21 ♘g5 g6 22 ♕g4 ♖e8!? White has the pretty 23 ♖e6!, when Black has no good defence) **21 ♘g5+ ♔g8 22 ♕d3 ♕xg5** (after 22...g6 23 ♕h3 Black must give up his queen anyway, and in worse circumstances) **23 ♗xg5 ♗d4 24 bxc5 ♗xc5 25 h4** and White went on to win without undue difficulties.

277) I hope you didn't give up on White's initiative! At times like this, you must consider all and any ways to keep the fire burning, even at a major cost in material. 23 d5!! ♕xb2 24 ♗g6+ ♔d7 25 0-0! fits the bill, and turns out to give White a decisive attack: 25...exf2+ (25...♔d6 26 dxc6 ♗xe6 27 ♕g3+! ♔xc6 28 ♖fc1+; 25...♕f6 26 ♕e4 exf2+ 27 ♔h1 ♗b7 28 dxc6+ ♘xc6 29 ♕d5+ ♔c8 30 ♖ac1 and White wins; 25...♗b7 26 dxc6+ ♗xc6 27 ♕xe3 and White's pieces move in for the kill; 25...e2 26 dxc6+! ♔xe6 27 ♕f5+ ♔d6 28 ♖fd1+! exd1♕+ 29 ♖xd1+ ♔xc6 30 ♕xc8+ leads to mate) 26 ♔h1 ♔d6 27 dxc6 ♗xe6 28 ♕g3+! ♕e5 29 ♖fd1+ ♗d5 30 ♖xd5+ ♔xd5 31 ♖d1+ ♕d4 32 ♖xd4+ ♔xd4 33 ♕xf2+ and White will pick off material without losing the initiative.

23 fxe3? is a distant second-best, as 23...♗xe6 24 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 25 d5 cxd5 26 ♗xh8 g4 27 ♕e2 ♘c6 is at least OK for Black. In the game, White grabbed material when he should have been sacrificing: **23 ♘c7+? ♔d8 24 ♘xa8 ♕xf5 25 ♕xe3 ♕d5**. With the d-pawn safely blockaded, White's pieces are

going nowhere, and the a8-knight can be rounded up at Black's leisure. Black went on to win fairly comfortably.

278) 19 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 20 ♕xc5 ♖d5 (20...♕xb3 21 ♘c1) 21 ♕c4 gives White good survival chances.

19 ♕xc5? is the bad option due to **19...♘xg3!**. This devastating sacrifice doesn't fit into any standard pattern, which makes it hard to see. After **20 fxg3** (20 ♗xb7 allows the *zwischenzug* 20...♘xe2+) **20...♗xg2**, the critical line is 21 ♔xg2 ♕xe2+ 22 ♔g1 (22 ♖f2 ♕e4+ exploits the undefended rook on b1; 22 ♔h1 ♖ac8 23 ♕xe7 ♖c2!) 22...♕e3+ 23 ♔h1 (or 23 ♖f2 ♗xe5) 23...♕xg3 24 ♕c4 ♕xh3+ 25 ♔g1 ♕g3+ 26 ♔h1 e6, when Black has three pawns for the piece (with more on the way), and retains attacking chances as the white forces are so poorly placed. White played **21 ♖f2**, which was essentially mute surrender, as Black has a very strong game without any material sacrifice. After 21...♗e4! 22 ♖bf1 ♕e6 23 ♔h2 ♖ac8 24 ♕a3 ♗f5 White's game is falling apart.

279) You perhaps found **16 ♖xb7+!** by a process of elimination or deduction. Knight checks don't work, and the problem in some lines is that the e6-bishop is defended. This sacrifice either brings a rook into the attack, or deflects the black knight. It also gives the white queen entry points. This all adds up to a forced mate in 11!

16 ♘xd6+? misses the target since 16...♔g8 is a safe (and winning) reply. 16 ♘h6+? is the right idea, but the wrong move-order. 16...gxh6 leaves White empty-handed after either 17 ♖xb7+ ♔g8 or 17 fxe5+ ♔e8 as the e6-bishop is defended.

16...♔g8

After 16...♘xb7 it is now time for 17 ♘h6+! (not 17 ♘xd6+? ♘xd6 18 fxe5+ ♔g6) 17...gxh6 18 fxe5+ ♔g7 (18...♔g6 19 ♕xe6+) 19 ♗xh6+ ♔xh6 20 ♕xe6+ ♔h5 21 ♕f5+ ♔h6 22 ♕f6+ ♔h5 23 ♖f5+ ♔g4 24 ♕g5#.

16...♔g6 leads to the most attractive mating pattern: 17 ♘h4+ ♔h5 18 g4+! ♗xg4 (18...♔xg4 19 ♕d1+) 19 ♕f7+ g6 20 ♕xh7+! ♖xh7 21 ♖xh7+ ♗h6 22 ♖xh6#.

17 ♖xg7+!

The basic idea is to drag the king to the f-file and so bring the f1-rook into the attack: **17...♗xg7 18 ♘e7+!** (18 ♕xa8+? ♔f7 19 ♕a7+ ♗d7 20 fxe5 ♗xe5 leaves White a piece down and with his queen out of play) **18...♔f7 19 fxe5+ ♗f6 20 ♖xf6+ ♔xe7** (20...♔e8 21 ♕xa8+ ♔d7 22 ♕c6+ ♔d8 23 ♖f8+ forces mate) **21 ♕xd6+ 1-0**. 21...♔e8 22 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 23 ♕e7#.

280) 29 cxd6! wins, as the black king turns out to be in the greater danger:

a) After 29...♖xc3, 30 ♔xg2 is now strong, notably because the ...d4+ discovered check doesn't hit a white piece any more.

b) 29...d4 30 dxc7! (30 ♖xc7?? allows 30...♖xh2++! 31 ♔xh2 ♕h4+ 32 ♔g1 ♕h1#) 30...♖xf2+ 31 ♕f3!! ♖xf3 (31...♗xf3+ 32 ♘xf3!) 32 c8♕+ ♗xc8 33 ♖xc8+ ♔g7 34 ♖g1+ ♔h6 35 ♘xf3 is hopeless for Black.

c) 29...♖cg7 30 d7 (creating a threat to Black's back rank) 30...d4 31 ♖c8+ ♖g8 (31...♗xc8 32 dxc8♕+ ♖g8 33 ♘f7+ ♕xf7 34 ♕e5+ is an easy win for White) 32 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8+ (32...♔xg8 33 ♕c4+ and f3) and now the accurate 33 f3! seals off Black's counterplay and wins.

The game proceeded in a very different direction: **29 ♔xg2? d4+ 30 ♔f1?** (30 ♔g1 is best, but after 30...dxc3 31

cxd6 c2 32 dxc7 cxd1♕+ 33 ♕xd1 ♕g7+ 34 ♔f1 ♗a6+ Black should hang on; 30 ♘f3 leads to a virtually forced draw: 30...♖g7+ 31 ♔f1 dxc3 32 ♖xd6 ♗xf3 33 ♕xf3 c2 34 ♕e3 ♕a1+ 35 ♔e2 c1♕ {not 35...c1♘+? 36 ♔f3} 36 ♖d8+ ♖g8 37 ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 38 ♕e8+ ♔g7 39 ♕e7+ ♔g6 40 ♕e8+ ♔h6 41 ♕e6+ with perpetual check) **30...♗xe5 31 fxe5?** (31 c6 ♗xf4 favours Black) **31...♕c6 32 ♖g3 ♕h1+ 33 ♖g1 ♗g2+ 0-1**.

281) 12...♕a6! is objectively the right decision, and psychologically strong too, as we shall see. A queen exchange would reduce the danger and open up the question of whether the d6-pawn is in fact a weakness.

It is not totally clear that 12...hxg5?! is bad for Black, but it is extremely risky and leaves him struggling to survive after 13 ♘xg5!:

a) 13...♖h6 14 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 15 ♘b5 ♖f6 16 ♖he1 with more than enough play for the piece.

b) 13...♘f6 14 ♘b5 ♗xb5 15 ♕xb5+ ♘bd7 16 ♖he1 with powerful threats; e.g., 16...a6? 17 ♕c4 b5? 18 ♖xe6+.

c) 13...a6 14 ♘xe6! fxe6 15 ♕xe6+ ♔d8 16 ♖he1 ♘f6 17 d7! ♘fxd7 18 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 (18...♘xc6? 19 ♘d5) 19 ♕e8+ ♔c7 20 ♖e6 and White regains material with his attack far from exhausted.

d) 13...c4 frees up the c5-square, but it turns out to be not so much use after 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♕xe6+ ♔d8 16 ♖he1 ♘f6 (16...♘c5 17 ♕f7!) 17 d7! ♘fxd7 (17...♗xd7 18 ♗xa8) 18 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 19 ♕e8+ ♔c7 20 ♖e6 ♕c5 21 ♖d5 ♕xf2? 22 ♖c6+! and mate next move.

e) 13...♗xg2 is met by 14 ♘b5 and now 14...♗xh1? 15 ♘c7+ ♕xc7 (not 15...♔d8? 16 ♘xf7#) 16 dxc7 gives Black a lot of material for the queen, but White's threats are too strong. That leaves Black scraping around for a defence. 14...♘f6 15 ♘c7+ ♔d7 16 ♘xf7 leaves his position fragile, while after 14...♕c6 15 ♘c7+ ♔d8 16 ♘xf7+ ♔c8 17 ♖he1 ♖xh2 18 ♕xe6 he will have to return a good deal of material to parry White's threats. After 14...♘a6 15 ♘xe6, the fact that 15...f6 is the only way to hang on for a while tells us that White's idea has succeeded. 16 ♘f4+ ♘e5 17 ♘xg2 ♕g4 18 ♕xg4 ♘xg4 19 d7+ ♔d8 20 ♖he1 ♘e5 21 ♘f4 ♘xd7 22 ♘e6+ ♔c8 23 ♘xf8 ♖xf8 24 ♖e7 leaves Black tied up in knots.

13 ♕e3!?

Short chooses to retain the queens, but now the piece sacrifice is much more of a gamble. After 13 ♕xa6 ♘xa6 14 ♗e3 or 13 ♗f4 ♕xe2 14 ♘xe2 g5 White is struggling to keep the d6-pawn, while Black's game is healthy.

13...hxg5 14 ♘xg5??

Short had apparently missed the importance of the c8-square being available to the black king. After 14 ♖he1, intending ♗f1 and ♘xg5, White has at least some compensation for the piece. One thing is clear: this is a much-improved version for Black of the lines we saw after 12...hxg5?!.

14...♗xg2 15 ♘xe6 fxe6 16 ♕xe6+ ♔d8 17 ♖he1 ♔c8 (the king escapes comfortably because the queen is no longer on c8, and so Black is two pieces up for very little) **18 ♘d5 ♔b7 19 ♘c7 ♖h6 20 ♕g8 ♕a4 0-1**

282) White's winning idea, if he has one at all, must be based on threats to promote the c-pawn, and the harder it is for Black to cover the c8-square, the more likely this idea is to work. The black rook's temporary lack of access

to the c-file suggests that this is the time to take forcing measures. More concretely, Black threatens to draw with 41...♔d5 followed by ...♖xb8 and ...♔xc6, which narrows White's choice to moves that parry this threat, i.e. 41 ♔c2, 41 ♗b6 or a move by the bishop along the b8-h2 diagonal.

41 ♗f4!!

White needs to free the c-pawn to advance. To retain its guard of the knight, the bishop must logically move to either e5 or f4 (41 ♗d6?? is clearly absurd). Analysis shows that f4 is the only one that works – primarily because it also creates the idea of ♗xg5, and doesn't expose the bishop to attack by ...♖b5.

We can eliminate the other moves mentioned above, as 41 ♔c2? and 41 ♗b6? both allow the black rook to reach the c-file in time. 41 ♔c2? ♖b4 means that Black can play ...♖c4+, and then 42 ♔c3 ♖b1 still leaves Black's rook with c-file access via ...♖c1+. 41 ♗b6? (with the idea 41...♖xb6? 42 c7) doesn't work because after 41...♖b4 or 41...♖b2+ the rook cannot be prevented from coming to the c-file.

However, more detailed analysis is needed to eliminate 41 ♗e5?, viz. 41...♖b5 42 c7 ♖c5 43 ♘a6 ♖d5+ (more forcing than 43...♖c6, which also gives White no convincing follow-up) 44 ♔e3 (44 ♗d4 ♔d7!; 44 ♔c3 ♔d7) 44...♖xe5+ 45 ♔d4 ♖e4+ 46 ♔d3 ♔d7 47 ♘c5+ ♔xc7 48 ♘xe4 fxe4+ 49 ♔xe4 is drawn.

41...♖b5 42 c7 ♖c5 43 ♘a6 ♖d5+

43...♖c6 loses to 44 ♗xg5! ♖d6+ (or 44...♔d7 45 ♘b8+) 45 ♔e3 ♔d7 (45...♖c6 46 ♗f4) 46 ♘b8+ ♔xc7 (46...♔c8 47 ♗f4) 47 ♗f4.

44 ♔c3?

But this is wrong, as it leaves the king too far from the kingside. 44 ♔e2! ♔d7 45 ♗xg5! wins in truly study-like fashion:

a) 45...♖d6 46 ♘b8+ ♔xc7 (after 46...♔c8 47 ♗f4 White has secured his c-pawn and will win by standard means) 47 ♗f4 with a decisive pin.

b) 45...♖a5 46 ♘b8+ ♔xc7 47 ♗d8+!! is a beautiful winning tactic.

c) 45...♖e5+ 46 ♔d3 ♖a5 is a logical try once one has seen the game continuation, but the white king is still close enough to the kingside for 47 ♘b8+ ♔xc7 48 ♗d8+!! to win.

44...♔d7! 45 ♗xg5 ♖a5! 46 ♘b8+ ♔xc7! 47 ♗d8+ (the same tactic as in the last note, but with White's king on the c-file, it is in vain) **47...♔xd8 48 ♘c6+ ♔d7 49 ♘xa5 ♔e6 50 ♔d4 ♔f6 51 ♔e3 ♔g5** (now the draw is clear; if White's king had been any nearer the kingside, he would have been able to preserve his last pawn) **52 ♔f3 h5 53 ♘c4 h4 54 gxh4+ ♔xh4 55 ♔f4 ♔h3 56 ♔xf5 ½-½**

283) 25 e4! is the right way to handle the attack:

a) 25...♕xd4 26 ♕xd4 ♖xc7 gives Black only a rook and a bishop for the queen, and 27 e5 loosens the black position to the great advantage of the white queen.

b) 25...♕xe4 26 ♗c5+ ♔d8 27 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 28 ♕d6 gives White decisive threats; e.g., 28...♕c6 (28...♕d5 29 ♕e7+ ♔c7 30 ♗d6+ ♕xd6 transposes) 29 ♕e7+ ♔c7 (29...♔c8 30 ♖c1 {threatening ♗e3} 30...♔b7 31 ♖b1+ ♔c8 32 ♗b6) 30 ♗d6+! ♔c8 (30...♕xd6 31 ♖c1+ ♕c6 32 ♖xc6+ ♔xc6 33 ♕xg7 is similar) 31 ♕f8+ ♗e8 32 ♗f4 ♕d7 33 ♖c1+ ♔d8 (33...♔b7 34 ♕b4+ mates) 34 ♗c7+ ♕xc7 35 ♖xc7 ♔xc7 36 ♕xg7+ is hopeless for Black.

c) 25...♕b5 allows White a strong attack for no material sacrifice: 26

♗c5+! (much more effective now that the white queen has access to h5) and then:

c1) 26...♔d8 27 ♖xd7+ ♕xd7 (after 27...♗xd7 28 ♕d6 Black will at least lose a pawn or two for nothing; e.g., 28...♖c8 29 ♕e7+ ♔c7 30 ♖d1 ♔b8 31 ♖xd7 ♕xc5 32 ♕xe6) 28 ♕h5 shouldn't be survivable for Black; e.g., 28...g6 29 ♕h4! g5 30 ♕h6 ♕f7 31 f4 g4 32 f5 e5 (32...exf5 33 exf5 ♗b7 34 ♖e1 and ♖e7) 33 ♖d1+ and ♖d6.

c2) 26...♔e8 27 ♕h5+ g6 (27...♔d8 seeks to turn the 5th-rank pin against White, but 28 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 29 ♖c1 ♖c8 30 ♕f7 neatly solves that problem) 28 ♕h6! ♖xc7 29 ♕f8+ ♔d7 and of several good possibilities, 30 ♗d6! is most convincing, as it threatens mate in two.

284) The only winning move is 47 a3!. To understand why, we need to see how other moves fail. Forcing tries don't yet work: 47 h5? gxh5 48 gxh5 a5 and 47 g5? fxg5 48 fxg5 hxg5 49 hxg5 a5 are drawn. 47 f5? g5 48 h5 ♔c6 is also a safe draw. Presumably seeing those lines, the Norwegian star chose **47 a4? a5**, but this position turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang: White wins if Black is to move, but only draws if it is his turn. The essential point is that with this kingside pawn-structure, advancing a pawn allows the opponent to determine who has the next king move. And with zugzwangs about, this factor tends to prove decisive. Play continued **48 ♔c4 ♔c6 49 g5 fxg5!** (Black must still analyse carefully: 49...hxg5? 50 fxg5! also lets Black decide how to resolve the pawn-tension, but this doesn't help since 50...fxg5 51 hxg5 gives White the opposition, while 50...f5 is met by the decisive breakthrough 51 h5!) **50 hxg5** (allowing Black an outside passed pawn, but after 50 fxg5 h5! Black again has the opposition and draws) **50...h5 51 f5!** (this is the only move to *draw*) **51...♔d6 52 fxg6 ♔e7 53 ♔d5 ♔f8 54 ♔e4 ♔g7 55 ♔f5 h4 56 ♔g4 ♔xg6 57 ♔xh4** with a draw by Bähr's rule – see an endgame manual (e.g., *Secrets of Pawn Endings*) for details of this useful guideline.

From this, it is clear that White needs to lose a move, and why 47 a3! wins:

a) 47...f5 48 gxf5 gxf5 49 h5 leaves Black helpless.

b) 47...g5 48 fxg5! (and not 48 hxg5? hxg5 49 f5 ♔c6 50 a4 {50 ♔c4 ♔d6} 50...♔d6!) 48...fxg5 49 h5 ♔c6 (49...♔e6 50 ♔e4) 50 ♔e5 and White wins.

c) 47...h5 48 gxh5 gxh5 49 ♔e4 ♔e6 50 a4! a5 (50...f5+ 51 ♔d4 ♔d6 52 a5 ♔c6 53 ♔e5 and White wins the pawn race) 51 f5+ ♔d6 52 ♔d4 ♔c6 53 ♔c4 and Black must give ground.

d) 47...a5 48 a4! (this is the reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play) 48...g5 (48...♔c6 49 h5 gxh5 50 gxh5 ♔d6 51 f5 ♔c6 52 ♔c4; 48...f5 49 gxf5 gxf5 50 h5; 48...h5 49 gxh5 gxh5 50 f5) 49 fxg5 (49 hxg5 hxg5 50 f5 also wins) 49...fxg5 50 h5 ♔e6 51 ♔e4! (51 ♔c5? ♔e5) 51...♔f6 52 ♔d5 and the white king runs amok.

285) 38 ♘f8+! wins. The lines are highly attractive, as the white pieces work in harmony to shepherd the d-pawn forward while attacking the black king and keeping the black queen at bay:

a) 38...♔g8 39 ♘d7+! ♔f7 (39...♔h7 40 ♘e5! neatly defends g4 and sets up a fork: 40...♕xd6 41 ♖h8+ ♔xh8 42 ♘f7+) 40 ♖e7+ ♔g6 (40...♔g8 41 ♘e5 ♕xd6 42 ♖e8+ is the same idea) 41 ♘e5+ ♔f6 and the finishing touch is

42 g5+!, deflecting the king so that 43 d7 and 44 ♖e8 can follow.

b) 38...♔h6 39 ♖e4! sets up a beautiful self-supporting mechanism. White intends 40 d7 followed by 41 f3, when the king can hide on h3 if checked, freeing the rook. A typical line would then be 41...♕d2+ 42 ♔h3 g6 (42...♕f2 43 ♖e6+ ♔g5 44 d8♕+) 43 ♖e6 ♔g7 44 ♖e8 ♕d1 45 ♘e6+ ♔f7 46 ♘g5+ and d8♕. There isn't a whole lot Black can do to oppose this idea; for example, 39...♕d3 40 ♖e3, 39...g6 40 g5+ ♔xg5 41 ♖d4 or 39...g5 40 d7 a5 41 f3 b6 42 ♖e7 intending ♖h7#.

Other moves only draw. 38 f3? enables White to promote his pawn, but only at the cost of rook and knight: 38...♕e2+ 39 ♔g3 ♕e1+ 40 ♔f4 ♕d2+ 41 ♔f5 (41 ♔e4 doesn't stop Black's checks: 41...♕e2+ 42 ♔d5 {42 ♔d4 ♕d2+} 42...♕xf3+) 41...♕d3+ 42 ♔g5 ♕g6+ 43 ♔h4 ♕xe8 44 d7 ♕xe6 45 d8♕ is a drawn queen ending. 38 ♘g5+? ♔g6 also fails to coordinate White's pieces, and allows a perpetual check. The move chosen in the game, **38 d7?**, saves the d-pawn, but fails to restrict the black queen: **38...♕xg4+ 39 ♔f1 ♕d1+ 40 ♔g2 ♕g4+ 41 ♔h2 ♕h4+ 42 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 43 ♔h1 ♕h3+ 44 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 45 ♔h2 ♕h4+** ½-½.

286) 14...e5! is an excellent move. It initiates a long forcing variation where Black ends up with a piece for two pawns, and excellent winning chances. It's not quite "a piece for nothing", so answer C was most appropriate. Critical for the idea's success are both mating ideas on g2 and the undefended knight on a4 – believe it or not!

15 dxe5 (15 ♗g5? e4 shows why White can't ignore the e-pawn's advance, while after 15 c5? ♗xf3 16 ♕xf3 exf4 17 c6 ♖xe1+ 18 ♖xe1 b5 Black keeps his extra piece) **15...dxe5 16 ♘xe5 ♘h5! 17 ♗f1** (this counterattack on d7 only fails for a very subtle reason; 17 ♗h2? loses to 17...♘xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♕g5 {attacking both e5 and g2} 19 ♗g3 ♘xg3 20 fxg3 ♕xg3 21 ♗f1 ♗h6, invading on e3) **17...♘xf4! 18 ♕xd7** (forced in view of 18 ♘xd7? ♖xe1) **18...♕xd7 19 ♘xd7 ♖xe1 20 ♖xe1 ♗c6!** (exploiting the undefended knight on a4; if you calculated this far, you did incredibly well!) **21 ♘xf8 ♗xa4 22 g3 ♘h5**. The f8-knight is trapped, and White will get only one pawn for it. White's pieces aren't quite active enough to generate enough counterplay, and he went on to lose the ending.

287) 22 ♘xf7! is best:

a) There are several good replies to 22...♕e8, including 23 ♘f6+ gxf6 (23...♘xf6 24 exf6 ♖xf7 25 ♗xe6) 24 ♘d6.

b) 22...♖xf7 23 ♘xh6+ gxh6 24 ♗xe6 ♕f8 25 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 26 ♕g4+ and White regains the sacrificed material with interest.

22 ♘xh6+?! gxh6 23 ♘xf7 is a less convincing implementation of the same idea, as Black has 23...♕b6. The game continued **22 ♘f3? d4 23 ♘d2 ♘d5 24 ♕f3** (24 ♘xh6+ ♔h7! 25 ♕e4+ ♔xh6 26 ♗xe6 {26 g4? g5} 26...♘5b6 27 ♕g4 g5 is good for Black) **24...♕c7 25 ♗g2 ♗a8 26 ♕e2 a3**. Having pushed White back, Black went on the offensive, though the game was later drawn.

288) 28 ♗xh6!

Now ♖xf7 is a major threat, and in many lines a key supporting role is played by the bishop lurking on c2.

28 ♖xf7? hxg5 29 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 30 exd7 ♗xd4 31 ♖e8 ♘d8 32 ♕xg5 ♕f6 certainly doesn't offer White winning

chances, but he can probably draw by eliminating Black's pawns.

28 ♗f6? ♘xd4 29 ♗xd4 ♗xe6 30 ♗xb6 ♗xg4 31 ♗c5 ♖fc8!? 32 ♖xg4 ♘xb2 33 ♖c1 ♗f8 is at least OK for Black.

28...♗xh6

Several alternatives must be considered:

28...♗xe6 29 ♖xe6 is winning for White: 29...fxe6 (29...♗xh6 30 ♖xg6+ fxg6 31 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 32 ♕e6+, mating) 30 ♕xg6 ♖a7 (30...♕a7 31 ♘e5 ♖xf4 32 ♕h7+ ♔f8 33 ♘xc6 ♕c7 34 ♗g6 and Black is mated; 30...♕c7 31 ♘c5 ♖xf4 32 ♕h7+ ♔f8 33 ♘xe6+) 31 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 32 ♕xe6+ ♖ff7 33 ♕e8+ ♔h7 34 ♖h4+ ♔g6 35 ♕e6+ ♔g5 36 ♕h6+ ♔f5 37 ♘e5#.

After 28...♗e8 29 ♕h3 Black will not survive; e.g., 29...fxe6 (29...♘e7 30 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 31 ♖h4; 29...♘d6 30 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 31 ♖h4) 30 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 31 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 32 ♘f4.

28...♗c8 29 ♕g5 leaves Black with an impossible defensive task; for example, 29...♕c7 30 exf7+ ♖xf7 31 ♖e8+.

28...♘d8 29 ♘c5! ♗xe6 30 ♕g5! gives White a decisive attack.

29 ♖xf7! (the key point) **29...♖xf7** (29...♘6e5 30 ♘xe5 ♕xe6 31 ♖xd7 with a decisive material advantage for White) **30 exf7+ ♔g7 31 ♕xd7 ♖f8 32 ♖e6 ♘b8 33 ♕xd5 ♕c7** and now the neatest finish would have been 34 ♖xg6+! ♔xg6 35 ♘c5+ ♔g7 36 ♘e6+.

289) 22...♖g8!! gives Black a very dangerous attack. The main threat is ...♖xg5+, and White has no decent defence, despite his extra rook. The most critical and spectacular line is 23 ♘e6 ♖xg5+!! (to gain control of the c5-square; 23...♕xe5?? 24 ♘c7+ is good for White, while 23...dxe5? transposes to the game – then 24 ♖xe4! ♗xe4 25 ♖d1 ♗d5! 26 ♖xd5 ♕e1+ is a draw), when after 24 ♘xg5 ♕c5+ 25 ♔g2 ♘f6+ the white queen is lost, while 24 ♕xg5 ♘xg5 25 ♗xc3 ♘h3# is a beautiful checkmate. Conversely, 23 ♘f3 is met not by 23...♖xg5+?? 24 ♕xg5, when the knight on f3 means there is no checkmate, but 23...dxe5, with decisive threats; e.g., 24 ♖e2 ♘f6!? 25 ♕h3 e4. Other moves are simpler to deal with. After 23 ♗xd6 ♕xd4+ 24 ♔g2 ♘xg5+, White is mated, while 23 g6 dxe5 is hopeless for White. Black also wins after 23 h4 dxe5 (threatening ...♕g3+) 24 ♘f3 ♘f6! 25 ♕h6 ♗xf3, while 23 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 (now the threat is ...♕e3+) 24 ♕h4 (24 ♘f3 dxe5 is simply bad for White, as is 24 ♗g3 ♕xd4+) 24...dxe5 25 ♕xe4 ♕xd4+ leads to a won ending for Black.

However, Black missed this golden opportunity, and **22...dxe5? 23 ♘e6!** allowed White right back into the game. The main threat is g6. After the forced sequence **23...♖g8 24 ♖xe4! ♗xe4 25 ♖d1 ♗d5! 26 ♖xd5** Black should have taken a draw by perpetual check with 26...♕e1+ 27 ♔g2 ♕e4+, etc.

290) Answer D is correct: the position is drawn, though you have my sympathy if you chose B, as 51 h7 forces Black to find a very cunning defence.

51 g6

White keeps his pawns connected, but the fact that he is not yet threatening to promote allows Black a relatively simple draw.

51 ♖b1?! ♔f7 gives White nothing at all.

After 51 h7!?, the threat of promotion ties the black rook to its back rank. 51...♖f8? 52 ♖xf8! (52 ♖b1? ♔f7 53 ♖xb2 ♔g6 is a draw) 52...b1♕ 53 h8♕ is a straightforward win for White, but the 'tempo-losing' 51...♖h8! 52 g6

♖f8!! draws (not 52...b1♕? 53 ♖xb1 ♔f6 54 ♖b6+). After 53 ♖xf8 (53 ♖b1 ♔f6) 53...b1♕ the white pawn being on g6 makes all the difference: 54 h8♕ ♕xg6+ is a draw because White's queen and rook are poorly placed to block the checks from the black queen, while 54 ♖e8+ ♔d7! 55 ♖d8+ ♔c7! 56 ♖c8+ ♔d7! changes nothing.

The key defensive idea here would be hard to see over the board, as we are accustomed to every tempo being precious, and the fact that the ...♖f8 idea fails at first makes it harder to consider a move later, in superficially worse conditions.

51...♖b6!

White had no doubt seen 51...b1♕?? 52 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 53 h7!, but had perhaps missed the fact that his pawns are vulnerable on the sixth rank.

52 g7 ♖g6+ 53 ♔h4 ♖xh6+ 54 ♔g5 ♖h2! 55 ♔g6 ♖g2+ 56 ♔h7 ♖h2+ 57 ♔g8 ♔e8

Black's b-pawn prevents White from using the standard 'Lucena' technique, so the game is drawn.

291) 17 ♘xg6!

White defends by removing the supporting pieces from Black's attack. But he will neutralize first the rook and only then the knight, which is the piece generating so many threats. Not 17 ♘xh3?? ♘xh3#, while 17 e4? is a bad move-order, as 17...♕g4 18 exf5 ♕xf4! shows.

17...hxg6

17...♕g4 (threatening ...♘h3#) requires an accurate response: 18 ♖xf3 (18 ♘e7+? ♔f7 19 ♖xf3 ♘xf3+ 20 ♔f2 ♘g5 gives Black at least enough play) 18...♘xf3+ 19 ♔f2. A key point is that 19...♘g5? now fails to 20 ♘e5 or 20 ♘f4, while 19...♘xd4 20 ♘e7+!? ♔f7 21 exd4 ♕xd4+ 22 ♔g2 ♕xa1 23 ♗b2 ♕e1 24 ♗e2, threatening ♗c3, leaves Black in serious trouble. After 19...hxg6 20 h3! (not 20 ♗e2? ♕e4) 20...♕xh3 21 ♔xf3 Black's attack is at an end. In the endgame, Black may be able to get three pawns for the piece, but will face a tough fight for survival in view of White's active pieces and strong bishop-pair.

18 e4!

Perfectly timed, since right now the black knight has nowhere to go.

18...fxe4

After 18...♕g4? 19 ♗xg5 fxe4 20 ♗e3 exd3?! 21 ♕f2 White will be a rook up since 21...♗e4 allows mate by 22 ♕f8+ ♔h7 23 ♖f7.

19 ♗xg5 exd3 20 ♕f2!

This is White's main idea. He isn't ahead on material (yet), but has fully claimed the initiative. The game ended **20...♗e4 21 ♕f7+ ♔h7 22 ♖f2 ♘c6 23 ♖e1 ♕g4** (23...♗f5 is an attempt to muddy the water, but 24 d5 ♘d4?! 25 ♗f6 is one of several good answers) **24 ♕xd7 bxc5?** (Black collapses completely; however, 24...♗f3 25 ♗f6 ♖g8 26 ♕xc7 bxc5 27 d5 is highly favourable for White) **25 ♖f7 ♖g8 26 ♗f6 1-0**.

292) 30 axb7? led to a very bad ending for White after a surprisingly rich sequence of tactical blows: **30...♖xb7 31 ♗f3** (skewering queen and rook, so Black must continue to go with the flow) **31...♖xb3 32 ♗xe4 ♖e3** (again forced, but now Black's pieces are set up for a knight fork on g2) **33 ♗c6 ♖b8! 34 ♘g2 ♗c3!** (the sucker punch!) **35 ♘xe3 ♖xb2+ 36 ♔a1** (now Black regains the piece with a discovered check, but 36 ♔c1? allows mate by 36...♖a2 and ...♖a1#) **36...♖b6+ 37 ♔a2 ♖xc6**, and with a good extra pawn, Black proceeded to win the endgame.

Therefore White should have chosen 30 ♗h5!, which is essentially a disruptive *zwischenzug*. It is close to winning by force, but Black can just about hang on. After 30...♖ee7 White has the better of a drawn opposite-coloured bishop ending at the end of both these lines:

a) 31 axb7 ♖xb7 32 ♕xe6+ (32 ♖xd6 {threatening ♖d8#} 32...♖ge7 33 ♘xe6 ♗a5 34 ♘c5+ ♖xb3 35 ♘xe4 with an unclear ending) 32...♕xe6 33 ♘xe6 ♗c3 34 ♖xd6 ♖xb2+ 35 ♔c1 ♖b8 36 ♘xg7 ♔xg7.

b) 31 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 (31...♕xe6? 32 ♖xd6! ♕xb3 33 ♖d8+ ♖e8 34 ♖xe8#) 32 ♖xd6 ♖ge7 33 axb7 ♕xb7 34 ♕xb7 ♖xb7 35 ♖xe6 ♗c3 36 ♗f3 ♖xb2+ 37 ♔c1 ♖a2 38 ♔d1 ♖a1+ 39 ♔e2 ♖e1+ 40 ♔d3 ♖xe6 41 ♗d5.

293) 19...♘a4!! is based primarily on the possibility of trapping the white queen, with the loose white pieces on c3, e3, d2 and a1 as vital supporting features:

a) 20 ♘xa4 ♖b5 traps the white queen: 21 ♕b6 (21 ♘b6 ♖xa5 22 ♘xc8? and the tragedy for White is that 22...♖xa1+ is check) 21...♖xb6 22 ♘xb6 ♕b7 gives White just rook and knight for the queen, and Black is the one whose forces are better coordinated.

b) 20 ♖xa4 ♗xa4 exploits the looseness of the white pieces on c3 and e3: 21 ♘xa4 (21 ♕xa4 ♕xc3) 21...♖b5 22 ♘b6 ♕c3 23 ♖d3 ♕e1+.

c) 20 ♖d3 ♗d8! (20...♘b2 is also quite promising) 21 ♕h5 gives Black several good options, of which 21...♗e8! is the neatest, continuing the pursuit of the white queen (...f5 is threatened) while attacking the c3-knight.

d) 20 ♖a3 ♗d8 21 ♕h5 ♗e8 (the alternative 21...♖xb4 is less ambitious but simpler: it gives Black an extra pawn, and also makes it hard for White to avoid simplification) 22 ♘xa4 f5 23 ♖c3 ♕d7 24 ♘c5 ♕b5 and White will not get enough for his queen.

e) 20 b5 may be objectively best, but 20...axb5 leaves White a pawn down for nothing with a miserable position.

Sadly, Black missed his chance, and **19...♘d7? 20 ♖b1 ♕b7 21 g5 ♖fc8 22 ♕a2 ♘b6** led to a fairly 'normal' position. The game eventually ended in a draw.

294) Black's only winning move is 56...♖f2!. This threatens ...♖f1, limiting White's choice:

a) 57 b6 loses to 57...♖f1.

b) 57 ♔g1 ♖d2! (57...f4? 58 b6 is a draw) 58 ♔h2 (58 b6 is met with 58...e2 and 58 ♖e1 by 58...f4) and now 58...e2! (compare with the game continuation) does win. The main point is 59 ♖e1 ♖d1!, while 59 b6 ♖d1 and 59 ♖g1 ♔f6 followed by ...♖d1 are also terminal.

c) 57 ♖g1 ♔f6 58 b6 (58 ♖xg2 e2! 59 ♖xf2 e1♕) 58...f4! (58...♖b2? 59 c5! leads to a draw after 59...f4 60 c6!, 59...♔e6 60 ♔g3 or 59...♔e5!? 60 ♖xg2! e2 61 b7! e1♕ 62 ♖xb2) keeps Black's options open, and wins:

c1) 59 b7 ♖b2 60 ♖c1 ♖xb7 61 ♔xg2 ♖b2+ 62 ♔f3 ♖f2+ 63 ♔e4 e2 and the two pawns defeat the one.

c2) 59 ♔h3 ♔f5 changes little: 60 c5 f3 or 60 b7 ♖b2.

c3) 59 c5 is perhaps the trickiest line to foresee, as White queens first, but Black wins: 59...f3! 60 c6 ♖f1 61 c7 ♖xg1 62 c8♕ (62 ♔xg1 e2) 62...♖h1+ 63 ♔g3 g1♕+ with mate to follow.

56...f4? 57 b6 f3 (57...♖f2 58 ♔g1) 58 b7 ♖b2 59 ♖xb2 e2 is only a draw. Black played **56...e2?**, preventing the immediate capture of the g2-pawn, but

his pawns had permanently lost their cohesion. After **57 ♖e1** (57 b6 ♖xc4 58 b7 ♖b4 59 ♖e1 is also a draw) **57...♖xc4 58 ♔xg2 ♖b4 59 ♖xe2** the draw was clear, though Georgiev forced his youthful opponent to demonstrate that he knew the elementary 'Philidor' drawing technique!

295) Shkabatur – V. Gerasimchuk
Ukrainian Corr. Ch 2009-11

30...♗xf3! 31 gxf3 ♕xf3+ 32 ♔g1 h5!

This is a vital follow-up, intending ...♖g5+ and ...h4. Not 32...♖g5+? 33 ♗g3 h5 34 ♕xb4.

33 ♕xa6

The other critical line is 33 ♗g3 h4 34 ♗xh4 (34 ♖f1 ♕e3+ 35 ♗f2 ♖g5+ 36 ♔h1 ♕f3#) 34...♕e3+! 35 ♗f2 (35 ♔h1 ♕e4+) 35...♖g5+ 36 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 37 ♔e2 ♖e5+ 38 ♔d2 ♖c8 and Black will mate. After 33 h4 ♖f5! 34 ♕c2 ♕g4+ 35 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 36 ♔g1 ♖f4 or 33 ♕c2 ♖g5+ 34 ♗g3 h4 Black wins back the piece with a big advantage.

33...♖g5+ 34 ♗g3

Now Black chose **34...h4**, which gave him a significant plus, but the most incisive line is 34...♕e3+! 35 ♔f1 h4 36 ♕e2 ♕xb6 37 ♗f2 ♕c6 38 ♕e3 f6 39 ♕h3 ♕b5+ 40 ♔e1 (40 ♕d3 ♕b7 41 ♕h3 ♖c8) 40...♖e5+ 41 ♗e3 f5, winning.

296) Sebenik – E. Berg
Sarajevo 2010

33...♘xg5! is correct: 34 fxg5 (34 ♕h8+ ♔f7 35 ♕f6+ ♔e8 36 ♕xd6 ♘f3+ 37 ♗xf3 ♕xf4+ leaves Black the exchange and two pawns up) 34...♖xf2 (this temporary queen sacrifice is the main idea) 35 gxh6 (35 ♔h1 ♗xg2+ 36 ♔g1 ♕f8 37 ♕h8+ ♔f7 leaves Black with too many extra pawns; 35 ♕h8+ ♔f7 is a disaster for White) 35...♖xg2+ 36 ♔h1 ♖c2+ 37 ♔g1 ♖xc3 with a won ending for Black.

33...d5? doesn't give Black anything special after 34 ♗xe4 dxe4 35 ♘xe4 ♕xf4+ 36 ♔g1. In the game, **33...♗xg2?** let White off the hook. **34 ♘xf7 ♕xf4+?** (after 34...♔xf7 White should take an immediate draw by perpetual check) **35 ♔xg2 ♔xf7?! 36 ♕b3+ ♔e8 37 ♖e1+ ♔d8 38 ♕b6+ ♔c8 39 ♕c6+ ♔b8? 40 ♕b6+?!** (40 ♗f6! wins neatly) **40...♔c8 41 ♕c6+ ♔d8 42 ♕xa8+ ♔d7 43 ♕b7+ ♔d8 44 ♖e2** left White better, but he actually went on to lose!

297) Czebe – Szalanczy
Budapest 2010

21...♗e4! creates a double attack on f3 and d5. It looks like Black is walking into a pin, but it is easily broken, and in fact the idea is to lure White into leaving his a4-pawn undefended: 22 ♖e1 (22 ♗xe4?? ♕xe4 and now two white pieces are attacked; 22 ♘d2 ♗xd5 leaves Black with an extra pawn; 22 c4?? is a move White would like to play to solidify his structure, but it drops the f3-knight) 22...♗xd3 23 ♕xd3 (23 ♖xe8 ♗xf1 24 ♖xa8 ♘xa8 25 ♔xf1 ♘b6 and Black wins one of White's loose pawns; 23 cxd3 ♕xa4) 23...♕xa4 and Black is a safe pawn up with a sound position.

21...♗xd3?! is the second-best move, and gives Black a more or less viable game after 22 ♕xd3 (22 cxd3? ♘xd5) 22...b5. 21...♘xd5? 22 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7? loses to the double attack 23 ♕d3+. The move played in the game, **21...g6?**, is bad not only because it misses a great opportunity, but because it is ugly and compromising.

298) Wu Wenjin – Yu Yangyi
Hefei (rapid) 2010

37 fxg6! fxg6 (37...♗xd3? is met most convincingly and spectacularly by 38 ♗d8!; 37...hxg6? 38 ♕h4 and mate follows on h8) 38 ♗f5!! is a fantastic and surprising idea. White threatens ♗e6+, so Black must dance to White's tune:

a) 38...gxf5 and now 39 ♕g2+ starts a long and ultimately successful king-hunt, but 39 ♕xf5! is a simpler win; e.g., 39...♗e8 40 ♔h1.

b) 38...♖e8 39 ♕g2 (threatening both ♕xd5+ and ♗xg6) 39...♔f7 40 ♕xd5+ ♔xf6 41 ♕xd6+ ♔xf5 42 ♕f4+ ♔e6 43 ♕e5+ ♔d7 (43...♔f7 44 ♖c7+) 44 ♕d5+ ♔e7 45 ♖f1 and Black must give up his queen.

After **37 ♗xb5? ♕xb5** White's attack was insufficient in the game, and Black took over: **38 h4 ♕d7 39 ♖f1 ♖c8 40 h5 ♖c2 41 ♕f3 ♕xf5 42 ♕xf5 gxf5 43 ♖xf5 ♔f8 44 h6 ♖xb2 45 ♖xd5 ♗c7 0-1.**

299) Soffer – Livshits
Israeli Team Ch 2010

White should have played 21 d4! ♘d7 22 ♘c4 (22 ♗xb4 is also strong: 22...axb4 23 ♗c6 or 22...♖xb4 23 ♖xb4 and ♕xd7) 22...♗xd4 (22...d5 23 ♘xa5 and Black loses the b4-knight) 23 ♘xd6! (not 23 ♘xa5? ♘c5, while 23 ♘a3 ♖e5 24 ♕xd7 ♖xe2 is somewhat less clear) 23...♖b6 24 ♘c4! (24 ♕xd7? ♖xd6) 24...♖b5 25 ♘a3, when Black loses material.

21 ♘c2? threatens ♘a3 but yields no meaningful advantage, as Black secures his position by 21...d5 22 ♗f4 ♕e8. The move chosen in the game, **21 f4?**, looks strong, but it only wins an exchange, and in the resulting position, Black's a-pawn proved powerful enough to keep the game more or less balanced: **21...♘d7 22 ♗c6** (22 ♘c4 can be met by 22...♘c5 or 22...d5, while after 22 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 23 ♖xb4 axb4 24 ♕xd7 Black regains his piece, with an extra pawn, by 24...♕b6 or 24...♗d4) **22...♘xc6 23 ♕xb5** (23 ♖xb5 ♘b6) **23...♕xb5 24 ♖xb5 a4 25 ♘c2 ♘c5 26 ♗e3 ♘b3 27 ♔f2 ♖c8 28 ♖b1 d5** and the game was later drawn.

300) Gajewski – Tazbir
Polish Ch, Warsaw 2011

24 ♖d5!! wins. To see why, we need to understand why other moves are less effective. The direct 24 ♕h6? is premature because 24...♖g8 25 ♖d5 (25 ♗e4 ♖cd8; 25 ♖f4 g5) 25...♘d7 and ...♘f8 allows Black to cover his king. 24 ♖f4?! (White's second-best option) forces 24...g5 (not 24...♖g8?? 25 ♕xh7+!) 25 ♕xg5 ♖g8 26 ♕h5 ♘g6 27 ♖f5 ♘f8, after which Black is safe for the time being.

Therefore White chose **24 ♗e4?!**, threatening 25 ♕h6 ♖g8 26 ♖f4 (thanks to the e4-bishop, 26...g5 allows 27 ♕xh7#) followed by 27 ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 28 ♖h4#. However, **24...♖cd8!** turned out to be a strong defence, targeting the supporting forces. The counterplay against the white king arrives just in time to save his black counterpart. 25 ♕h6! is best, though Black survives after 25...♖g8 26 ♖f4! ♖xd1+ 27 ♔g2 ♖d2+ 28 ♔h1! (28 ♔f1? ♘g4!; 28 ♔g1? ♘f3+!) 28...♖d1+ 29 ♔g2 with perpetual check. 25 ♗d5?! ♕c8 26 ♖f4 (26 ♕h6 ♖g8) 26...g5! shows Black's defensive themes. **25 ♖de1?!** was Gajewski's choice, but 25...♕d7! (intending ...♕g4+ or ...♕d2) would have given Black excellent winning chances, as White can't play for mate with his own king so vulnerable.

So we can now see why 24 ♖d5!! wins, and the train of logic and analysis that could have led to this choice. It is essentially a prophylactic move, ruling

out in advance the defences to White's main attacking ideas:

a) After 24...♖g8 25 ♗e4! there is no longer a good reply to 26 ♖f4 and 27 ♕xh7+.

b) 24...♘d7 25 ♗h3 ♖fd8 26 ♖f4 and White has too many threats on the kingside.

c) 24...♖fd8 25 ♖f4! (after 25 ♕h6 ♖g8 26 ♖f4? g5 27 ♗e4?! gxf4+ Black survives because the white king lacks a safe square) 25...g5 26 ♕xg5 ♖g8 27 ♕xe5 shows one reason why the rook is useful on d5.

d) 24...♖cd8 25 ♕h6 (25 ♖f4 is also good) 25...♖g8 26 ♖f4 g5 27 ♗e4! leads to a forced mate.

e) 24...♖ce8 25 ♕h6 ♖g8 26 ♖f4 g5 27 ♗e4! gxf4+ 28 ♔f1 ♖g6 (28...♘g6 29 ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 30 ♖h5#) 29 ♗xg6 fxg6 30 ♖xe5! (overload) 30...♖d8 31 ♖e7 and White wins.

Conclusion

I hope that experiencing the critical and most instructive moments of 300 games has been a rewarding experience. If you tackled each exercise seriously, then you will have added considerably to your pattern-recognition ability, and be better equipped to handle many types of situations that arise in practice.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, there is more to chess than finding tactical solutions. Of course, there is also more to chess than good decision-making. You need to play the opening well, understand how to make plans, and have many other types of chess knowledge to inform and assist with your decisions. The books advertised on the final page may help in those areas – indeed, John Nunn's *Understanding Chess Middlegames* touches upon many topics that complement and dovetail neatly with themes I have emphasized in this book.

I would be very interested to hear how successfully readers solved the puzzles, or to receive any other feedback about this book, which can be sent by e-mail to gampuz@yahoo.com

Self-Rating Table

You may record your results here once you have completed each chapter. The par scores represent a likely performance by a strong club player. To convert your total score for the whole book into a very rough Elo rating, multiply it by 5 and add 900. So if you scored 150 points, you get a rating of 1650 (normal club level), while for a rating of 2400 (International Master), you would need 300 points.

Chapter	Maximum Score	Par Score	Your Score
1	37	35	
2	27	23	
3	38	20	
4	54	32	
5	37	22	
6	100 (i.e. 50 x 2)	45	
7	46 (i.e. 23 x 2)	16	
8	102 (i.e. 34 x 3)	20	
Total	**441**	**213**	
Rating (multiply by 5 and add 900)	3105	1965	

Please don't take this rating too seriously though! It's just an indication of how well you did, and your score will depend very much on how seriously you worked on each puzzle before looking at the answer, and how strictly you marked yourself.

1300	Good social player
1700	Average club player
1900	Good club player
2200	Local champion

2400	International Master
2500	Grandmaster
2800+	World Champion

All that remains is to hope that you enjoyed the book, and to thank all the players whose games I featured.

Chess Openings for Kids *by John Watson & Graham Burgess*
This book teaches the starting moves of the main chess openings, and explains the basic ideas. Beginners will learn how to position their pieces for maximum impact. More experienced players will discover some remarkable opening themes that are vital for chess mastery.
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Solving chess puzzles is one of the most effective ways to improve your game. This convenient book provides 300 exercises, with instructive points highlighted in the solutions.

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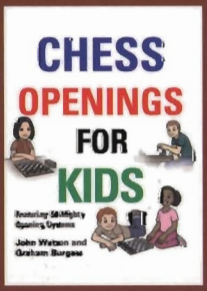
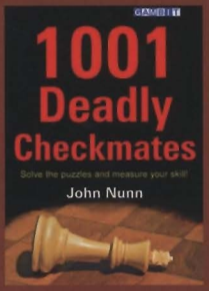
Later chapters develop your ability to make tough chessboard decisions. Attack, sacrifice, grab material, defend or simplify – you decide! Principles and guidelines are emphasized, together with common sources of error. The final section of puzzles will prove a stern challenge even for the best players, with the reader exposed to the full complexity of modern chess – with a few helpful hints along the way.

Gambit Publications has been publishing top-quality innovative chess books since 1998, winning numerous awards in several countries. FIDE Master **Graham Burgess** is Gambit's Editorial Director, and one of the founders of the company. He has written more than twenty books and holds the world record for marathon blitz chess playing. He lives in Minnesota.





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